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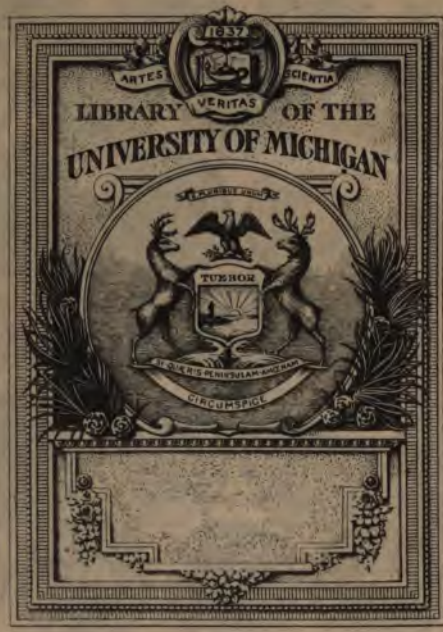
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AN ESSAY

ON THE

POWER and HARMONY

OF

PROSAIC NUMBERS:

Being a SEQUEL to one on the

POWER of NUMBERS

And the

PRINCIPLES of HARMONY

IN

POETIC COMPOSITIONS.

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PREFACE.

THE following Eſſay is chiefly intended for the Benefit of thoſe, whoſe Province calls them to employ much of their Time and Study in Compoſition; and to engage their Attention to one Branch of that Art, which though cultivated with great Aſſiduity and Exactneſs by the Antients, is but little known to many, and much neglected by moſt of the Moderns.

What I mean, is a critical Regard to the Structure of their Periods; or ſuch a Care in the Choice and Diſpoſition of their Words as will give them that agreeable Flow which

the Antients called *Rhythmus*: The Harmony of which every good Ear perceives, but the Principles from whence it flows, the Rules on which it depends, and the Way to acquire it, very few have any Knowledge of or Concern about.

And it is really ſomewhat ſurpriſing that our modern Rhetoricians ſhould lay ſo little Streſs upon a Thing which the antient Orators conſidered as ſo important. The true Reaſon of which I believe is this, it is generally looked upon as one of thoſe Minuteneſſes of Stile which are below the Notice of an elevated Genius, or at leaſt would be too dull and dry a Study to be reliſhed by Perſons of a refined Taſte; and ſo the whole Buſineſs is left to the Ear, by which the Writer is led, and the Reader judges, at Random. But to this Caſe is applicable that well known and juſt Obſervation, *Ea parva non ducenda ſunt, ſine quibus magna conſiſtere non poſſunt.* Thoſe Things are not to be counted little or unneceſſary, without which great Things can never be attained. Otherwiſe the Elements of all Languages and the Rudiments of all Sciences may be counted low and trifling.

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It

It is the Connection which theſe Things have with greater, that gives them their Importance, and a Claim to our Attention. Which is all the Apology I ſhall make for any Thing which may be thought minute or dry in the following Eſſay.

But however dull or difficult ſuch a Study may appear to the Reader at firſt, I am well ſatisfied, that as ſoon as he comes to make a little Progreſs in it, he will be fully convinced that the Pleaſure and Importance of it are more than equal to all the Pains he took to attain it. And of this let one who is very well verſed in this Subject be Judge.------" Many Writers (ſais " he) both in Verſe and Proſe, have been " very exact in their Choice of Words, e- " legant and adapted to the Subject; but " being deſtitute of a juſt Ear, run into " diſſonant and jarring Meaſures, by which " they loſe their Labour and ſpoil the " whole. Their Productions are unplea- " ſant and naufeous to the Reader. Others, " though ſo unlucky as to chuſe mean and " vulgar Words, yet by arranging them in a " melodious Manner, have given a ſurpri- " ſing Beauty to their Diction. The

" Truth

" 'Truth is, the Poſition of Words ſeems
" to bear the ſame Proportion to the Choice
" of them, as the Words themſelves have
" to the Sentiments. As the fineſt Senti-
" ment is cold and languid when not clo-
" thed with the Ornament of beautiful
" Language, ſo the Invention of the moſt
" pure and elegant Expreſſions will have
" ſmall Effect unleſs you add an harmo-
" nious Compoſition (*a*)."

" It would be too dull a Piece of Cri-
" ticiſm (as the ſame Author obſerves) for
" the Generality of Readers to conſider
" the Nature, Formation and Sound of the
" different Vowels, their Junction with
" Conſonants, and the Formation of Syl-
" lables; the due Length and Shortneſs
" of theſe, and what Pronunciation is pro-
" per to them; and to define their Num-
" bers would appear Scholaſtic, and down-
" right Pedantry to a Modern, who loves
" his Eaſe too much to be fettered by ſuch
" Rules. But this is certain that he who
" is wholly unexperienced in a Theory of
" this Kind, and never took the Trouble
" to reflect on it, cannot poſſibly be Maſ-
" ter

(*a*) See *Geddes* on the Compoſition of the Antients, p. 3.

" ter of a beautiful Stile: he writes at ran-
" dom, is guided by no Rule in his Com-
" poſition, and knows nothing of the juſt
" Meaſures and Cadency of Language (*b*)."
——And again, " What ever renders a Pe-
" riod ſweet and pleaſant, makes it alſo
" graceful; a good Ear is the Gift of Na-
" ture; it may be much improved but not
" acquired by Art. Who ever is poſſeſſed
" of it, will ſcarcely need dry critical Pre-
" cepts to enable him to judge of a true
" Rhythmus, and Melody of Compoſition:
" Juſt Numbers, accurate Proportions, a
" muſical Symphony, magnificent Figures,
" and that Decorum which is the Reſult
" of all theſe, are *Uniſon* to the human
" Mind; we are ſo framed by Nature that
" their Charm is irreſiſtable (*c*)."

In this then the Ear is a better Judge than Guide; it will much eaſier determine what a true Rhythmus is (*d*), than teach us how to attain it. But as *Tully* ſome-where

(*b*) Id. p. 18, 26.
(*c*) Id. p. 10, 11.
(*d*) Et tamen omnium longitudinum at brevitatum in ſonis, ſicut acutarum graviumque vocum, Judicium ipſa natura in auribus noſtris collocavit.——Aures enim, vel animus aurium Nuntio, naturalem quandam in ſe continet vocum omnium Menſionem. *Cic.* Orator §. 51, 53.

where tells us that the Laws of Verſe were originally invented, by reflecting upon and attending to that Order and Poſition of Words and Quantities which were moſt pleaſing to the Ear, ſo all the Rules for attaining a true Rhythm in Proſe Compoſitions have the ſame Original. And by conſidering what it is that the Ear moſt approves, Laws are invented and Rules contrived for acquiring ſuch a Stile in writing, which at once conveys Pleaſure to the Ear and Improvement to the Mind; by which we are to judge of all Compoſition in general, whether of Verſe or Proſe.

And here let it be obſerved, that as the Ear confirms thoſe Rules which lead us to a perfect Rhythm, ſo the Rules will be ſome Help to the Ear in judging of it.

I ſhall only add, that the following Piece pretends to nothing more than its Title expreſſes, *viz.* an *Eſſay* on the Subject. To have gone deeper into it would not have conſiſted with a proper Application to another Kind of Studies, to which the Providence of God more immediately calls me. If it be a Means of exciting

others

others to purſue it further, or may be helpful to any young Lovers of Learning, and eſpecially the Students and Candidates for the ſacred Miniſtry, to facilitate their Compoſitions, and give an eaſy Grace and Dignity to their Language, I apprehend it may be of ſome Service to Mankind; which is all the End I aim at.

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AN

AN

ESSAY

ON THE

Power of Numbers, &c.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

The high Eſteem the Antients had for numerous Compoſition. The general Neglect of it among the Moderns. The Reaſons of that Neglect. And the Weakneſs of thoſe Reaſons.

NUMEROUS Compoſition was held in great Eſteem among the beſt antient Writers, eſpecially about the Time of *Cicero*.

Iſocrates, who is univerſally admired for his Numbers, obſerving the Effect which they had upon the Mind in Verſe, is ſaid to be the firſt

that introduced them into Proſe; which he probably effected by reducing them to Rules, and by obſerving thoſe Rules in his Proſaic Compoſitions.

But *Cicero* attributes the Invention of them partly to *Thraſymachus*, who was before *Iſocrates*, aud partly to *Gorgias*, who was his Cotemporary but Senior; who were both exceſſively fond of this Ornament of Stile, as Men generally are of their own Diſcoveries; and ſais, that *Iſocrates* only improved upon their Thoughts, moderated the Numbers of which they were ſo laviſh, and reduced that Kind of Writing to its proper Standard (*a*).

The Invention of this Art then is an Honour for certain due to the *Greeks*; " and it does not ap-
" pear to have been obſerved by the *Romans* till near
" the Time of *Tully*. And even then it was by no
" Means univerſally received: the antient and leſs
" numerous Manner of Compoſition had ſtill many
" Admirers, who were ſuch *Enthuſiaſts to Antiquity*
" as to adopt their very Defects (*b*)."

However it ſoon made its Way among them; and *Cicero* obſerves, That in his Time Proſe had its meaſured Cadence as well as Verſe (*c*); and the eſſential Difference between them was no longer that which is contained in the old Definition of *ſoluta et ſtricta Oratio*, or that the one was confined to Meaſures and the other left at Liberty, but that the Meaſures in Proſe were more looſe and various than thoſe in Verſe.

Nor

(*a*) *Cic. Orat. Ed. Lond. Tom.* 1. *p.* 165. *b.*

(*b*) *Fitzoſborn*'s Letters. Let. 24,

(*c*) *Nam etiam Poetæ Quæſtionem attulerunt, Quidnam eſſet illud quo ipſi differunt ab Oratoribus; Numero videbantur antea maximè et verſu: nunc apud Oratores jam ipſe numerus increbuit. Cic.* in Oratore.

Nor did that great Orator himſelf think this Art beneath his Notice. He wrote upon it, and very happily ſerved himſelf of it. By the Power of Numbers united with that of Reaſon, he confounded the audacious *Cataline*, and ſilenced the eloquent *Hortenſius*. His perſwaſive Art would have loſt its Force without the Help of the *Rhythmus*, and all *Demoſthenes's Thunder* have failed him, had it not been hurled in Numbers (*d*)

Longinus who writ two Treatiſes on Harmonious Compoſition, which are now loſt, makes it a Branch of the *Sublime*; and ſais, " it hath not only a na-" tural Tendency to perſwade and pleaſe, but to " inſpire us, in a wonderful Degree with a generous " Ardor and Paſſion (*e*);" attributing the ſame Effect to it as to Muſic: and illuſtrates its Efficacy by a well choſen Inſtance out of *Demoſthenes's* Oration *de Coronâ*. And how much this very Art which he recommends contributed to make his Writings an Example of that *Sublime* they deſcribe, every one of good Taſte and Judgment will eaſily ſee.

This Subject hath been handled with great Nicety and Refinement by *Demetrius Phalareus*, *Dionyſius* of *Halicarnaſſus*, and *Quintilian*; eſpecially the two laſt (the former of which lived about fifty, and the latter about an hundred and fifty Years after *Cicero*) have made many curious Obſervations upon it; ſome of which I ſhall hereafter make Uſe of. And the Engliſh Reader would be really ſurprized to ſee with what Exactneſs they lay down Rules concerning

(*d*) *Quaſi verò Trallianus fuerit Demoſthenes: cujus non tam vibrarent fulmina illa, niſi numeris contorta ferrentur.* Cic. *Orat.* ad finem.

(*e*) Οὐ μόνον ἐσὶ πειθῆς καὶ ἡδονῆς ἡ Ἁρμονία φυσικὸν ἀνθρώπους ἐνέργημα, ἀλλὰ καὶ μετ' ἐλευθερίας καὶ πάθους θαυμασόν τι ὄργανον. *Longin. de Sublim.* Sect. 38. § 39.

Times, Feet, and Meaſures, in Proſe as well as Verſe; and how nicely they examine and anatomiſe Sentences, Words, Syllables, and even Letters, to find out the moſt ſoft and pleaſing Sounds to improve the Harmony of the Compoſition.

It muſt be acknowledged indeed that after the Diſſolution of the Roman Republick, this Art began to be perverted by being too much admired. Men grew exceſſively fond of the numerous Stile, and readily ſacrificed the Strength and Energy of their Diſcourſe to the Harmony and Cadence of their Language. *Pliny* the younger often complains of this contemptible Affectation. And *Quintillian* ſpeaks of certain Proſe-Writers in his Time, who boaſted that their Compoſitions were ſo ſtrictly Numerous, that their Hearers might even beat Time to their Meaſures. And it ſhould ſeem that even in *Tully*'s Time this Matter was carryed to Exceſs; ſince even then the Orators dealt ſo much in Numbers, that it was made a Queſtion, wherein they differed from the Poets.

But this was a manifeſt Abuſe of the Art; which in itſelf is ſo far from being Effeminate that it not only adds Grace but Strength to the Powers of Perſwaſion: otherwiſe it had never been ſo much ſtudied, recommended and practiſed by all the great Orators among the Antients.

However it muſt be owned that if the Antients carried this Matter to an Extreme one Way, the Moderns have run into as great another. If *they* too much admired this Art, *theſe* to much neglect it. Harmony in Proſe Compoſitions ſeems now to be little underſtood; and the Principles from whence

it

it flows ſtill leſs. Many modern Writers, and thoſe of no inconſiderable Name, are ſo very incurious in this Point, that provided there be Grammar and Thought they ſeem concerned for nothing elſe. As if a graceful Stile did not ſhew a fine Thought to as much Advantage as a decent Dreſs does a fine Gentleman. Intrinſick Excellence will not excuſe a negligent Slovenlineſs in either. Hence it is (as *Dionyſius* (*f*) obſerves) that we ſee the Language of one Writer low and creeping, of another mutilated and broken, of another ſhamefully coarſe and deformed; which is owing not altogether to an ill Choice of Words (as ſome are apt to think) but oftentimes to a mere Neglect of Numbers; and which perhaps might be intirely rectifyed with Regard to ſome particular Periods, only by the Omiſſion or Tranſpoſition of a ſingle Word.

I would not however in what I ſay be thought to prefer the Beauty of Elocution to that of Sentiment; which laſt is as much preferable to the firſt, as a Jewel is to the Caſket that contains it. But why may not a precious Stone be well poliſhed and well ſet? And who is not ſenſible of its ſuperior Luſtre when it is ſo?

Several Writers have taken Notice of this Defect in our modern Compoſitions. Dr. *Pemberton* ſpeaking of the Numbers in the Greek and Latin Tongues ſais, "that theſe Meaſures were of ſuch Effi-
"cacy in thoſe Languages, that the adjuſting their
"Periods to ſome agreeable Rhythmus or Move-
"ment, by an apt Succeſſion of long and ſhort
"Syllables,

(*f*) Οἷς δὲ μὴ ἐχένετο πρόνοια τῶν μέρων, οἱ μὲν ταπεινὰς, οἱ δὲ κατακεκλασμένας, οἱ δὲ ἄλλην τινὰ ἀισχύνην ἢ ἀμορφίαν ἐχούσας ἐξήνεγκαν τὰς γραφάς. *Dionyſ. Halicarn. de Struct. Orat. Sect.* xviii.

" Syllables, was conſidered in Oratory as an Art of " great Importance towards the Perfection of Elo- " quence. In our Language this ſeems to be ſcarce " thought of; though perhaps, what we common- " ly call Smoothneſs of Style is in Part owing to " ſomething Analagous; namely ſuch a Arrange- " ment of the Words whereby the Syllables follow " one another with a free and eaſy Cadence (*g*)."

Another Author, who for his numerous Stile is one of the firſt among the Moderns, and, I think, ſecond to few of the Antients, juſtly obſerves, " that " among the principal Defects of our Engliſh Ora- " tors, their general Diſregard of Harmony has, I " think, been the leaſt obſerved. It would be In- " juſtice indeed to deny that we have ſome Perform- " ances of this Kind among us tolerably Muſical; " but it muſt be acknowledged at the ſame Time, " that it is more the Effect of Accident than De- " ſign; and rather a Proof of the Power of our " Language than the Art of our Orarors." One probable Reaſon which he aſſigns for this Neglect is, " that poſſibly that Strength of Underſtanding " and Solidity of Reaſon, which is ſo eminently " our national Characteriſtick may add ſomething " to the Difficulty of reconciling us to a Study of " this Kind; as at firſt Glance it may ſeem to lead " an Orator from his grand and principal Aim; and " tempt him to make a Sacrifice of Senſe to Sound." ——In Reply to which he adds—— " that *Tully* " and *Quintillian*, thoſe great Maſters of numerous " Compoſition, have laid it down as a fixt and in- " variable Rule, that it muſt never appear the Ef- " fect of Labour in the Orator; that it is the high- " eſt

(*g*) Obſervations on Poetry, Sect. 12.

" eſt Offence againſt the Art to weaken the Ex-
" preſſion in Order to give a more muſical Tone
" to the Cadence; that the tuneful Flow of the
" Periods muſt always ſeem caſual; in ſhort, that
" no unmeaning Words are to be thrown in merely
" to fill up the requiſite Meaſure, but that they
" muſt ſtill riſe in Senſe as they improve in Sound (*b*)."
Which Rule is here very happily exemplifyed in the very Words that deſcribe it.

Others have imagined that our Language is not capable of being refined and beautifyed in this Manner. " The free Language we ſpeak (ſais an ingenious Author) will not endure ſuch refined Regula-
" tions, for Fear of Incumbrance and Reſtraint.
" Harmony indeed it is capable of to a high Degree,
" yet ſuch as flows not from Precept, but the Ge-
" nius and *Judgment* of Compoſers. A good Ear
" is worth a thouſand Rules; ſince with it the
" Periods will be rounded and ſweetened, and the
" Stile exalted, ſo that Judges ſhall commend and
" teach others to admire; and without it, all En-
" deavours to gain Attention ſhall be Vain and In-
" effectual, unleſs where the Grandeur of the
" Senſe will atone for rough and unharmonious Ex-
" preſſion (*i*)."

But in what Senſe our Language is capable of *Harmony to a high Degree*, and yet *will not endure* thoſe *Regulations* that are neceſſary to it; or how it can flow from the *Judgment* of the Compoſers without ſome Rule to direct that *Judgment* (for Judgment implys ſome Rule to judge by) I do

(*b*) *Fitzoſbourn*'s Letters. Letter 24.
(*i*) *Smith*'s Notes and Obſervations on *Longinus*. p. 183.

do not very clearly conceive. —— *A good Ear is worth a thouſand Rules.* —— 'Tis true; ſo it is in Muſic. But an Acquaintance with the muſical Notes and Chords, and the Rules and Principles of Harmony is notwithſtanding neceſſary to make a good Muſician. If we are to have no Rules, what muſt they do that have no Ear? And the beſt Ear may ſometimes receive very proper Correction from Precept.

In ſhort, this learned Author muſt mean, either that the Rules relating to numerous Compoſition ſo accurately laid down by the Antients, are not applicable to our Language; or if they are, there is no Need of them. But which ever of theſe he means (for he does not expreſsly ſay which, but ſeems to intimate both) the direct Contrary, I believe, will appear to the Reader in the Sequel of this Treatiſe. The Deſign of which is to ſhew, that the Rules and Principles of this Art, which was ſo much the Study and Admiration of the Greek and Roman Writers, are as Applicable to our Language as theirs, and in what Manner they are to be actually applyed in Order to Improve the Harmony of Proſe Compoſition.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Nature and Quality of ſimple Numbers or Feet, ſeperately conſidered.

THE ſimple Feet are theſe following

Feet of two Syllables.

Pyrrhic	⏑ ⏑
Iambic	⏑ –
Trochee	– ⏑
Spondee	– –

Feet of three Syllables.

Tribrachys	⏑ ⏑ ⏑
Dactyl	– ⏑ ⏑
Amphibrachys	⏑ – ⏑
Anapæſt	⏑ ⏑ –
Bacchic	⏑ – –
Cretic	– ⏑ –
Palimbacchic	– – ⏑
Moloſſus	– – – (*k*)

Theſe Numbers, conſidered in themſelves or unconnected with any other, are either Generous and Strong, or Baſe and Weak.

(*k*) For a more particular Account of the ſeveral Numbers both ſimple and compound, See *The Eſſay on the Power and Principles of Harmony in Verſe*, Chap. vi.

The generous Numbers are theſe,

Iambic	⏑ –
Spondee	– –
Anapæſt	⏑ ⏑ –
Cretic	– ⏑ –
Bacchic	⏑ – –
Moloſſus	– – –

The baſe Numbers are theſe (*l*).

Pyrrhic	⏑ ⏑
Trochee	– ⏑
Tribrachys	⏑ ⏑ ⏑
Dactyl	– ⏑ ⏑ (*m*)
Amphibrachys	⏑ – ⏑
Palimbacchic	– – ⏑

Theſe

(*l*) When we call theſe Feet baſe, low and feeble, we only mean when they are taken by themſelves; for when they are judiciouſly blended with others, they are of equal Importance with the reſt, and (like Mortar in a Building) contribute as much to the Strength and Beauty of the Compoſition. Which *Quintillian* does not ſeem to have attended to, when he blamed *Dionyſius* and other Writers before him for making this Diſtinction. [*Miror autem* (ſais he) *in hac Opinione doctiſſimos homines fuiſſe, ut alios pedes ita eligerent, alios damnarent, quaſi ullus eſſet quem non ſit neceſſe in oratione deprehendi.* De Inſtit, Orat. l. ix, c. 4.] For certain it is that theſe Feet which are called Baſe, Weak, and Low, are really ſo, when taken by themſelves or only with themſelves, and not intermixt with thoſe of better Quality.

(*m*) Though *Dionyſius* calls this σεμνὸς, *i. e.* a grave and venerable Foot, yet he only means when it is taken in Conjunction with the Spondee, which corrects and tempers it. And thus he immediately explains himſelf, καὶ εἰς κάλλος ἁρμονίας ἀξιολογώτατος, καὶ τό γε ἡρωϊκὸν μέτρον ἀπὸ τῆς κοσμεῖται ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ. De Struct. Orat. Sect. xvii. i. e. *it's very well fitted to Harmonize the Verſe, and to be an Ornament to the Heroic Meaſure*; where it is always mixt with Spondees. But of itſelf it is too light and feeble, and never fit to End a Verſe. And therefore thoſe Meaſures that admit it, always require for a Cloſe

one

Theſe Numbers are called generous or baſe, becauſe the Movement of the one is Sublime and Strong, and that of the other Low and Feeble.

Now this different Movement of the Feet depends upon two Things.

(1.) The different Quantities or Number of Time they contain, for a Foot that conſiſts of more Times is ordinarily more Magnificent than one that conſiſts of fewer. *e. g.* A Spondee (--) is more noble than a Pyrrhic (⏑⏑), becauſe that conſiſts of four Times, and this but of two; and a Moloſſus (---) more noble than a Tribrachys (⏑⏑⏑) becauſe the former hath double the Times of the latter.

(2.) Another Thing on which the different Movement of the Feet depends, is the Quantity of the Syllable with which it ends; for a Foot that ends with a long Syllable is more Strong and Sonorous, and conſequently more Noble and Generous, than one that terminates in a ſhort one. Thus an Iambic (⏑-), is more noble than a Trochee (-⏑); an Anapæſt (⏑⏑-), than a Dactyl (-⏑⏑): Though the Trochee contains juſt the ſame Number of Times as the Iambic, and the Anapæſt as the Dactyl. So that in this Caſe the Excellence of one above the other depends altogether on the Quantity of the final Syllable.

But here let it be remarked, that of thoſe which I call the generous or the noble Feet, ſome are more excellent than others; which is occaſioned by a ſhort Syllable preceeding the final long one. And

 this

one or two long Syllables to qualify it; as in the Latin *Hexameters*, and the Engliſh Dactylic Meaſure. See *the Eſſay on the Power &c. of Harmony in Verſe*, Chap. xix.

this indeed makes a more conſiderable Difference in the Nature of the Feet, than the Difference of Times they contain. Hence an Iambic (⏑–) is reckoned a better Foot than a Spondee (––), though the latter contains the moſt Times; and for the ſame Reaſon the Anapæſt (⏑⏑–) is more excellent than the Moloſſus (–––); becauſe the final long Syllable is rendered more diſtinct ſtrong and emphatical by coming immediately after a ſhort one.

Hence then it follows that the Iambic (⏑–) is the moſt noble and generous of all the Feet (*n*); and that the reſt have their Degree of Excellence in Proportion as they approach to or recede from it, in the following Order, Iambic (⏑–), Anapæſt (⏑⏑–), Cretic (–⏑–), Bacchic (⏑––), Spondee (––), Moloſſus (–––).

And it is obſervable that this Order or Diſpoſition, *viz.* that a quick ſhould be ſucceeded by a ſlow Movement, is univerſally agreeable. For as a long Time is beſt after a ſhort one, ſo is a long Foot after a ſhort one, a long Word after the ſhort ones (*o*), even as the ſlow Meaſures in Verſe, and the ſlow Airs in Muſic come in moſt agreeably after the quick ones. This is as pleaſing to the Ear as Reſt after

(*n*) Hence *Ariſtotle* ſais that in his Time it was more uſed than any other Number by thoſe who ſpake in Public. Αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ λέξις ἡ τῶν πολλῶν. Διὸ μάλιστα πάντων τῶν μέτρων ἰαμβεῖα φθέγγονται λέγοντες. Rhetor. l. 3. c. 8. And again in his *Poetics*, Ex omnibus Metris Sermoni quotidiano accommodatum maximè eſt *Iambicum*. Cui rei id ſigno eſt, quod plurima nos Iambica proferamus imprudentes in Collocutione mutuâ. *Ariſt. Poet. c. 2. None of all the Meaſures run more naturally into our common Speech than the Iambic; as appears from hence, that in our ordinary Converſation we often ſpeak in* IAMBICS, *before we are ſenſible of it.*

(*o*) *Ideoque etiam brevium Verborum ac Nominum vitanda Continuatio, et ex diverſo quoque longorum: afferunt enim quandam dicendi Tarditatem.* Quint. l. ix. c. 4.

after Motion is to Nature. If it be enquired, whence the Agreeableneſs of this Order ariſes, or on what Principles in Nature it is founded; this Myſtery perhaps lies too deep for our Diſcovery: Let it ſuffice that univerſal Experience verifies the Obſervation.

Another Thing that deſerves to be obſerved on this Subject is, that as ſome of the generous Feet are more noble than others, ſo they have each of them their reſpective Qualities. *e. g.* A Spondee (--) is a grave and majeſtick Foot (*p*); *Moloſſus* (---) ſublime and ſtately (*q*); *Bacchic* (⏑---) ſtrong and ſolemn (*r*); a *Cretic* (-⏑-) is a bold and eager Foot (*s*); the *Anapæſt* (⏑⏑-) rapid and vehement; excellently adapted to martial Muſic and martial Songs, which are therefore frequently ſet to this Meaſure. *e. g.*

⏑ ⏑ - ⏑ ⏑ -
With Hearts bold and ſtout
⏑ ⏑ - ⏑ ⏑ -
We'll repel the vile rout,
⏑ ⏑ - ⏑ ⏑ - ⏑ ⏑ -
And follow fair Liberty's Call;

⏑ ⏑
We'll

(*p*) *Hebetior videtur et tardior, habet tamen ſtabilem quendam et non expertem Dignitatis gradum.* Cic. Orat. Ed. Lond. Tom. 1. p. 166.

(*q*) Ὁ δὲ παλὸς καὶ ἀξιωματικός ἐστι, καὶ διαβεβηκὼς ὡς ἐπὶ πολύ. *Dion. Hal. de Struct. Orat. Sect.* xvii.

(*r*) So called, becauſe in this Kind of Meaſure the *Dithyrambic* Poets uſed to rant out their Songs in Honour of *Bacchus*. What is here called *Bacchic*, *Dionyſius* calls Hypobacchic; and terms it, ὁ ῥυθμὸς ἀξίωμα ἔχων καὶ μέγεθος. *Ibid.*

(*s*) Becauſe it approaches near to the Iambic, and (as *Tully* obſerves) ſounds to the Ear pretty much like the *fourth Pæon*, or *Pæon poſterior*. (⏑ ⏑ ⏑ -) as it contains the ſame Number of Times; and all the Difference between them is, th t the two ſhort Syllables in the Beginning of the Latter are contracted into one long one in the Beginning of the Former. *De Oratore*, l. 3.

We'll ruſh on the Foe,
And deal Death in each Blow,
Till Conqueſt and Honour crown all.

And *Tully* tells us it is the Meaſure in which the Roman Generals were wont to harangue their Men (*t*); as nothing is better fitted to excite the Paſſions (*u*). And the *Iambic* (which is of all the Numbers moſt generous) is very ſtrong and ſonorous, very proper (as *Horace* obſerves) to excite and expreſs the Paſſion of Anger (*v*). Hence the *Anapæſt* and *Iambic* are not improperly called by ſome, the *puſhing Numbers.*

And how naturally the Spondee, Anapæſt and Iambic (which are the moſt bold, ſtrong and ſonorous Feet) do run into a Martial Air, may be ſeen in the Margin, which demonſtrates the Qualities that have been juſt aſſigned them (*w*).

The

(*t*) *Nec adhebitur ulla ſine Anapæſtis Pedibus Hortatio.* Tuſcul. Quæſt. l. ii. c. 16.

(*u*) Ἀνάπαιστος σεμνότητα δὲ ἔχει πολλήν, καὶ ἔνθα δεῖ μέγεθος περιθεῖναι τοῖς πράγμασιν ἢ πάθος ἐπιδεικτικὸς ἐστι παραλαμβάνεσθαι. *Dion. Hal. de Struct. Orat. Sect.* xvii.

(*w*) *Archilocum* proprio rabies armavit Iambo. Art. Poet. l. 79. ſo *Quintilian*, Aſpero contrà Iambis maximè concitantur: non ſolum quòd ſint a duobus modò Syllabis, eoque frequentiorem quaſi Pulſum habent, quæ res lenitati contraria eſt; ſed etiam quod omnibus partibus inſurgunt, et a brevibus in longas nituntur et creſcunt. *De Inſt. Orat.* l. ix. c. 4. Ariſt. Poet. c. 2.

(*w*) The double double Beat
Of the thundering Drum

Cry's,

The Drum is an Inſtrument which in a wonderful Manner ſhews the Force and Power of Poetic Numbers; for though its Sound be only a Monotony, yet it exactly expreſſes all the different Qualities of the ſeveral Feet. And when we beat thoſe Numbers upon it, only by varying the Movement into quicker or ſlower, and making the Sound ſtronger or ſofter, the Mind is affected as much as it is by an Inſtrument that runs all the Notes of the *Gamut*.

Let us try then if we cannot, by imitating the Sound of this Inſtrument, exemplify the different Qualities of the ſeveral Feet as before deſcribed; by giving both to the baſe and the generous Numbers all the Advantage they can receive from Order or the Succeſſion of the long Syllables after the ſhort ones.

The baſe Numbers are theſe, Pyr: Troch: Tribr: Dact: Amphibr: Palimbac:

And

Crys, *Heark!* the Foe's come:
Charge! Charge! 'tis too late to retreat!

Say's Eſſay the ſecond, p. 167.

This will be more manifeſt by beating theſe ſeveral Numbers in proper time upon a Drum, *e. g.*

Titum tititum tumtum tumtum tititum,
Tititum tumtum titum tumtum;
Titum tumtum tititum tumtum tititum.

Now every Word, except a Monoſyllable, is compoſed of ſome Foot or Feet (*x*); the right Diſpoſition of which is that which conſtitutes what is *properly* called a *numerous Stile.* For though any Combination of Words may be reduced into their reſpective Numbers of which they are compoſed, yet unleſs thoſe Numbers be well adjuſted or agreeably intermixed; it is not called a *numerous*, but a *rough*, *lame* or *broken* Stile (*y*).

But a ſmooth and flowing is not the only numerous Stile; that which is rough, maſculine and vehement hath ſometimes an equal Claim to that Title; provided the Sound of the Numbers conform to the Senſe of the Words. To deny this, is in Effect to affirm that there is no Muſick but what is ſoft, and no Verſe but what is ſmooth. If the Senſe be ſublime and ſtrong, the Numbers ſhould be ſlow and ſtately. And be the Senſe what it will, the Words ſhould in ſome Degree be an *Eccho* to it, in Proſe as well as Verſe. On this Score it is that *Horace*,

(*x*) Πᾶν ὄνομα καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ ἄλλο μόριον λέξεως, ὅταν μὴ μουσυλλαβόν ἐστιν, ἐν ῥυθμῷ τινι λέγεται. *Dion. Hal.* de Struct. Orat. Sect. xvii.

(*y*) *Sed omnis nec claudicans, nec quaſi fluctuans, et æqualiter conſtanterque ingrediens, numeroſa habetur Oratio.* Cic. Orat.

That Stile (ſais *Tully*) which hath not a limping irregular Movement but a uniform conſtant Flow, is called a numerous Stile.——But his Meaning in what preſently follows, I confeſs I do not apprehend; where he ſais, *Idque quod numeroſum in Oratione dicitur non ſemper numero fiat ſed nonnunquam aut concinnitate aut conſtructione Verborum.* Id. Ed. Lond. T. 1. p. 167. a. *i.e.* That a numerous Stile is not always owing to the Numbers, but ſometimes to a certain neat Conſtruction of the Words. —— But what that agreeable Conſtruction of the Words can be owing to, but the Numbers of which they are Compoſed, I am at a Loſs to gueſs. —— Unleſs he means (as perhaps he may) that there are ſome Words of ſo harſh and jarring a Sound, that when they meet (though they may compoſe a good Number yet) cannot be pronounced without ſome Difficulty: Which indeed is ſometimes the Caſe.

Horace, notwithſtanding the Roughneſs and Irregularity of ſome of his Meaſures, eſpecially in his *Satires*, may be deemed, what the ſmoother *Ovid* calls him, a *numerous* Writer (*z*).

Were we (as *Dionyſius* (*a*) obſerves) to uſe none but the beſt and moſt generous Numbers, our Stile would be always Muſical; that is, either ſoft and flowing, or grave and majeſtick. But as we are obliged for the Sake of Aptitude of Expreſſion to make Uſe of Words that introduce the weak and feeble Numbers, which tend to break the Harmony and debaſe the Majeſty of our Language, the great Art lies in mixing and diſpoſing of thoſe baſer Numbers in ſuch a Manner as that the Harſhneſs of them ſhall give no Offence to a good Ear; which in this Caſe is a very ſovereign and critical Judge. And this is done chiefly by mixing them with as much good Company as we can; I mean with better Numbers: And diſpoſing of them into thoſe Places where they will be leaſt attended to, that is in the Middle of a Period, and keeping them by all Means from the End of it, where the Ear always expects to be pleaſed.

Every Sentence may be conceived as diviſible into diſtinct and ſeperate Clauſes; every Clauſe where there is an apparent Ceſſation of the Voice, ſhould always End with a generous Foot; and all the preceding Numbers be ſo intermixt, that the ſhort ones be duly qualified by the ſucceeding long ones; reſerving the beſt and moſt harmonious Numbers for the Cadence. And this, in ſhort, is what conſti-

(*z*) *Sæpe tenet noſtras numeroſus Horatius Aures.*
See *Say*'s Eſſay, p. 116.

(*a*) De Struct. Orat. Sect. xviii.

tutes that agreeable Fluency of Words which in Proſe we call a ſmooth and pleaſant Stile; and which, if at the ſame Time it be clear and expreſſive, hath all the Elegance of which Proſe-Compoſition is capable. To illuſtrate this by one plain Inſtance. A late Divine ſpeaking of the Trinity hath this Expreſſion — *It is a Myſtery which we firm|ly be|lieve the| Truth of,| and hum|bly a|dore the| Depth of.*—Here the Language is expreſſive but not harmonious. And what is the Reaſon of this? Not merely becauſe each Clauſe of the Sentence ends with the Sign of the Genitive Caſe (which, if it be ſometimes deemed an Inaccuracy, yet does not always interrupt the ſmooth Flow of the Words) but becauſe it is compoſed almoſt intirely of baſe and feeble Numbers, *viz. Pyrrhics* and *Trochees*; as appears from the Reduction of them; which by a ſmall Tranſpoſition of the Words might eaſily be avoided. As thus —— *It is a Myſtery, the Truth| of which| we firm|ly be|lieve|, and the Depth| of which| we hum|bly adore.|* Every Ear will ſoon determine this to be the moſt agreeable Diction. And the Reaſon why it is ſo is now very plain. Becauſe according to this Diſpoſition of the Words, the Sentence is compoſed altogether of ſtrong and generous Feet, *viz. Iambics* and *Anapæſts*. But the Method of reducing the Members of a Proſe Period into the original Numbers of which they are compoſed, will be more particularly conſidered in the following Chapter.

But before I conclude this, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that this is the only Reaſon, that in

all

all Languages (eſpecially the learned ones) we find the Words ſo frequently tranſpoſed out of their natural Order; *viz.* to give them a ſofter Flow, a ſtronger Sound, or ſmoother Cadence, by reſerving the moſt ſweet, ſtrong and generous Numbers for the Cloſe. For which end ſuch a Tranſpoſition is always allowable, provided it do not by being too frequent, ſtiffen the Stile, obſcure the Senſe, or ſeem affected.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the Manner of reducing Proſaic Numbers, or examining the Feet of which any Period is compoſed.

HERE we are to take *Dionyſius* for our Guide; who hath ſhewn us in various Inſtances how Proſaic Numbers are to be reduced (*c*). To take one out of many, let us ſee in what Manner he examines the Numbers of that celebrated Speech of *Thucydides*, which he affirms to be ſo full of Grandeur and Dignity, and begins thus — Οἱ μὲν | πολλοὶ | τῶν ἐν|θάδε ἤ|δη εἰ|ρηκότων, | ἐπαινοῦ|σι τὸν προσ|θέντα τω | νόμω τὸν | λόγον τόν|δε. — Now that which gives ſuch an Air of Majeſty to this Sentence (ſais he) is, that each Member of it is compoſed of the moſt ſublime and generous Feet. For in the firſt Member, which ends with the Word εἰρηκότων, the three firſt Feet are *Spondees*, the fourth an *Anapæſt*, the fifth a *Spondee*, and the ſixth

(c) De Struct. Orat. Sect. xviii.

ſixth a *Cretic*. And in the ſecond Member of the Sentence, which begins with the Word ἐπαινῆσαι, the two firſt Feet are *Bacchics* (which he calls *Hypobacchics*) the third a *Cretic*, and the two laſt Feet *Bacchics*; the whole concluding with an odd Syllable, which is common.

Now here I would make the following Obſervations.

(1.) That in reducing Proſe-Sentences into their Original Numbers, there is no Neceſſity to confine ourſelves to Diſſyllable Feet only.

For in reducing the firſt Member of this Sentence, *Dionyſius* uſes both the Diſſyllable and Triſſyllable Feet: But it is capable of being reduced into all diſſyllable Numbers; thus — Οι μεν | πολλοι | των εν | θαδε | ηδη | ειρη | κοτων. And according to this Method of Reduction you ſee there is but one feeble Foot among them, *viz.* the *Pyrrhic* in the fourth Place; and even this is not at all amiſs, as it is there ſituated; for the *Spondee* immediately following corrects its Rapidity, and gives it the agreeable Air of an *Anapæſt*.

Therefore (11.) In examining the Numbers of a Proſaic Period, it is uſually the beſt Way to reduce them into Feet of three Syllables rather than thoſe of two.

For this Reaſon; becauſe though there may be ſeveral weak and baſe diſſyllable Feet in it, yet as they ſtand in Conjunction with others of a better Quality, they are ſtrengthened and harmoniſed, and become very good Feet of three or four Syllables.

Thus

Thus the *Pyrrhic* and the *Trochee*, though they are both weak and feeble Numbers of themselves, yet followed by a *Spondee* they gather Force, and the one has the Air of an *Anapæst* and the other of a *Crétic*, which are both good trissyllable Feet. And therefore *Dionysius*, you observe, resolves the second Member of the Sentence into all *Trissyllables*; by which Division they appear to be all strong and generous Numbers. Whereas were they to be divided all into Dissyllables thus—ᴗ – – ᴗ – – – ᴗ επαι|νουσι|τον προσ|θεν|τα, – ᴗ – – ᴗ – – τω νο|μω τον|λογον|τονδε,—there would appear to be no less than three *Trochees*, which of themselves are base and feeble Feet; and might tempt us to think that the Numbers were not good. But being all succeeding by a long Syllable, they are exalted and confirmed, and assume the Grace and Force of a *Crétic*, which is a good trissyllable Foot.

(111.) The last Syllable of a Prose Sentence, like that of a Verse, is always common; that is, may be considered as long or short, as it best suits the Close.

For this we have *Tully*'s Authority (*d*). *Quintilian* indeed pretends that his Ear could distinguish whether the last Syllable of a Sentence be long or

(*d*) Nihil enim ad rem, extrema illa, longa sit, an brevis *Orat:* – ᴗ – ᴗ – ᴗ – ᴗ and therefore he makes the Word *persolutas* as well as *comprobavit* to be a *Dichoree*, which he recommends as no bad close. But when he commends a double *Trochee* for a good close, it's much he shou'd condemn a single *Trochee* for a bad one; especially since it may be considered as a Spondee, by his allowing the last Syllable to be common, And yet we find he does, in these Words, *sed eò* (Trochéus) *vitiosus in oratione si ponatur Extremus, quod Verba melius in Syllabas longiores cadunt.* Id. p. 166. (b).

or ſhort (*e*). And perhaps it might; but I ſee no Neceſſity to deſcend to ſuch extreme Refinements. Therefore

(IV.) The laſt Syllable being common, it is often neglected and made no Account of (eſpecially if it be naturally ſhort) and ſerves only to give a Grace or Flouriſh to the preceeding long one, and may be conſidered in the ſame Quality as a double Rhime in the End of a Verſe. Thus in the laſt Word of the Sentence before us (τόνδε), the Syllable (δε) you ſee is detached from the final Foot, or rather conſidered as belonging to the laſt Syllable, as a Part of it.

This odd Syllable at the Cloſe which cannot conveniently be taken into the laſt Number is called by the Greeks καταλήξις; of which *Dionyſius* gives us ſeveral Inſtances in | the Place | above | refer'd | to. But

(V.) What is chiefly to be remarked in the Method in which *Dionyſius* reduces the above Sentence is this, (*viz.*) hence it appears that the Greeks read their Proſe as well as their Verſe by the *Quantity* and not by the *Accent*; that is, in Pronunciation they laid the Streſs or Force of their Voice on the long Syllables though they were not accented, and ſlurred quickly over the ſhort ones though they were.

For *Dionyſius* here reduces the Numbers according as they were pronounced. And in the firſt Clauſe

(*e*) Quamvis habeatur indifferens ultima——aures tamen conſulens meas intelligo multum referre, utrumne longa ſit quæ cludit, an pro longâ. De Inſt. Orat. l. ix. c. 4. p. 486.

Clauſe in the Words ἐνθάδ᾽ε and ἐρημκόλων, though the Syllable (θά) in the former, and (κό) in the latter are both accented, yet according to the Diſpoſition of the Numbers here given us, we find they are both pronounced ſhort, and read thus ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ἐνθαδ᾽ε ἐρημκόλων. So in the laſt Member we find the firſt Syllable of the Word νόμω and that of the Word λόγον were both pronounced ſhort, though both accented, and read thus ⏑ – ⏑ – νομω, λογον. This therefore (after all that hath been ſaid upon the Subject) to me appears a Demonſtration, that with Regard to the Streſs or Emphaſis of the Pronunciation, the Antients read by the *Quantity only*.

If it be ſaid, of what Uſe then were the Accents? I anſwer, they were deſigned very probably at firſt to regulate the Tone or Key of the Voice, not the Streſs or Force of it, which are two very different Things; or to ſhew when the Voice is to be elevated or depreſſed; that is, not when it is to be ſtronger or weaker, but higher or lower, acute or grave, according as the Accent directed. This, as it is extremely difficult for us to imitate them herein, and would anſwer no good Purpoſe that I know of if we could, is ſufficient to juſtify us in paying them no Regard at all, and furniſhes us with a good Reaſon to read Greek Proſe as well as Poetry, according to the *Quantity only* as the Greeks themſelves did.

Let us take another Inſtance out of the ſame Author (p. 139.) and ſee how he reduces the following Sentence of *Plato*.—⏑ – – ⏑ – – ⏑ – – – – ⏑ – ⏑ – – ὧν τυχόν|τες πορεύ|ονται | την ἐμμαρμένην | πορείαν. Here (ſais he) the two firſt Feet are *Critics*,

then follow two *Spondees*, then a *Cretic*, and laſtly a *Bacchic*. So that here again he uſes both diſſyllable and triſſyllable Feet. And his calling the three laſt Syllables of the Word εἱμαρμένη a *Cretic*, it is plain he read it thus εἱμαρμενη, without any Regard to the Accent on the Penultima (μέ).

After this Example now let us examine the Feet in the Engliſh Tranſlation of the two firſt Verſes of the Bible, and we ſhall preſently ſee how much the Grandeur of the Stile is owing to the Strength and Magnificence of the Numbers, in which the Tranſlators are often very happy.

In the Be|ginning | God creat|ed the Heavens | and the Earth, | and the Earth | was without | Form and void; | and Darkneſs | was upon | the Face | of the Deep.

Theſe three Sentences thus reduced, appear to be made up of all the moſt generous Feet, *viz.* the Spondee, Cretic, Moloſſus, Bacchic, Iambic and Anapæſt, without one weak or faultering Foot among them; unleſs it be the firſt, which is a Dactyl. And that being corrected by a long Syllable immediately ſucceeding, becomes a good initial Number.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Concerning the moſt proper Feet to cloſe a Sentence.

THE Antients (who I think have refined this Science to Exceſs) have laid down ſeveral Rules concerning the moſt proper Initial Numbers. Which I ſhall not trouble the Reader with for this Reaſon; Becauſe the Ear is leſs apprehenſive of and more reconciled to a bad Rhythmus in the Beginning than it is in the End of a Sentence. And therefore as an Orator will reſerve his beſt Thoughts, ſo his beſt Numbers to the laſt; that he may cloſe with *Eclat*; in which there is much Pleaſure, Propriety and Elegance.

It was a Queſtion among the Antient Orators, Whether the whole Period ſhould be compoſed in Numbers, or only the Beginning and End of it? That is, whether an Orator is obliged to ſtudy and attend to the juſt Diſpoſition of his Numbers throughout the whole Sentence, or only in the two Extremes of it. *Tully* is for the former Part of the Queſtion, but thinks that Care ſhould be taken to reſerve the beſt Numbers 'till laſt: And gives this Reaſon for it; Becauſe (ſais he) the Ear, which is always waiting for the Cloſe of the Sentence, wants to be gratified then, and therefore ſhould not be diſappointed of the Pleaſure it expects (*f*). And beſides

(*f*) Cùm Aures Extremùm ſemper expectent, in eoque acquieſcant, id vacare numero (i. e. generoſo) non oportet. Orat. Ed. Lond. T. 1. *p. 166. b.*

ſides (as *Quintilian* (*g*) well obſerves) the Ear is more at leiſure and more diſpoſed to Judge of the concluding, than it is of the intermediate Numbers.

Now the ſeveral Cloſes recommended by the Antients are theſe.

(1.) A *Dichoree*, or double Trochee. This Cloſe was approved by *Tully* and *Quintilian* (*h*), and was much in Uſe among the Greeks. And it was chiefly on Account of this ſweet and decent Cloſe (as *Tully* obſerves) that the following Sentence was received with ſuch incredible Applauſe.—*Patris Dictum ſapiens, Temeritas filii* comprobavit (*i*).

But it ought to be obſerved that as the laſt Syllable is common, it may be conſidered as long, and then the three laſt Syllables will be a *Bacchic*: Again, as the laſt Syllable may be conſidered as καταληξις or ſupernumerary, then the three preceeding Syllables will be a *Cretic*; both which are ſtrong and generous Feet. And this is the Reaſon that a *Dichoree* though it be in itſelf a baſe and feeble Foot yet makes a Cloſe ſo graceful.

The ſame may be ſaid

(11.) Of a *Dactyl*. Becauſe the laſt Syllable being common, the concluding Foot may be conſidered

(*g*) Quòd Aures continuam Vocem ſecutæ ductæque velut prono decurrentis Orationes Flumine, tum magis judicant cum ille Impetus ſtetit et intuendi Tempus dedit. *Lib.* ix. c. 4.

(*h*) Dichoréus eſt ille non vitioſus in Clauſulis; cadit autem per ſe ille ipſe præclare. Id. p. 167. b. Cludet et Chorêus ſi Pes idem ſibi ipſi jungetur. *Quint.* l. ix. c. 4.

(*i*) *Orat.* Id.

ed either as a *Dactyl* or a *Cretic* (*k*), and is very well preceeded by a Cretic or an Iambic; as is obſerv'd by *Quintilian* (*l*).

Mr. *Manwaring* aſſerts that a Cretic before a Dactyl makes a good Cloſe, *e. g. What will this End in but treacherous Knavery:* But that a Spondee before a Dactyl is bad, and gives this Inſtance, *What will this End in but downright Knavery?* But on what Rule, Authority or Reaſon he builds his laſt Aſſertion, I know not. If the Ear be Judge, the latter Cloſe is altogether as good as the former (*).

(III.) An *Iambic*, As this is the moſt noble and generous of all the Feet, there is no one that makes a finer Cloſe, eſpecially if (as *Quintilian* (*m*) obſerves) it be preceeded by a *Bacchic*; which forms a Foot of five Syllables called *Dochymus* (⏑–––⏑–) and is the ſame as an *Iambic* and *Cretic*. This is a firm ſtately cloſe. And a Spondee preceeding a final Iambic always ſtands very well.

And as an Iambic is ſo fine a Cloſe, all thoſe compound Feet that end with an Iambic, muſt of Conſequence be ſo too. *e. g.*

(I.) A Ca-

(*k*) Nihil enim intereſt, Dactylus ſit extremus, an Creticus: quia poſtrema Syllaba, brevis an longa ſit, ne in verſu quidem refert. *Id.*

(*l*) L. ix. c. 4.

(*) See his *Harmony*, &c. p. 26.

(*m*) Quint. l. ix. c. 4.

(1.) A Cretic. Which *Tully* allows to be a good final Foot.

(2.) Some have recommended the *Pæon Poſterior* (⏑⏑⏑–) which contains the ſame Number of Times as the Cretic, but one Syllable more, and is compoſed of a Pyrrhic and Iambic, as a Foot that Cloſes admirably well (*n*). But *Tully* prefers a Cretic before it for a Cloſe; which, if the Ear may be a Judge, is a much better Foot (*o*).

(3.) An Anapeſt is a good final Foot, as it ends in an Iambic. And as it's two firſt Syllables are ſhort, it is beſt preceeded by one that is long.

(IV.) A Spondee makes a good Cloſe. It may be preceeded

(1.) By a ſhort Syllable; and then it becomes a Bacchic. Or

(2.) By a long one; and then it becomes a Moloſſus; a very majeſtic Foot.

(3.) By

(*n*) *Say*'s Eſſay. p. 108.

(*o*) And the other, which is called the *firſt Pæon* (– ⏑ ⏑ ⏑) conſiſting of a Trochee and a Pyrrhic, and is nothing elſe than the former Pæon reverſed, is recommended by ſome as a good initial Foot; See *Say*'s Eſſay. p. 108. *Quint.* p. 487. And theſe Movements *Ariſtotle* thinks are peculiar to Proſe; becauſe no Verſe can be formed of them. For being in the Seſquialterate Proportion (*i. e.* as 2 to 3) they are not capable of being regularly meaſured by the Hand *per Arſin et Theſin*. Vid *Ariſtot. Rhetoric.* l. 3. c. 8. *Eſſay on Numbers*, &c. Chap. vii.

(3.) By a Trochee; and then it becomes the firſt Epitrite (- ⏑ - -) a Cloſe which *Tully* much delights in (*p*).

(4.) By a Cretic. *Quintilian* well approves this Cloſe (*q*).

(5.) By an Anapæſt. This is but barely admitted by the Author before mentioned, (*r*).

(6.) By a Dactyl. This indeed is condemn'd by *Quintilian* for this Reaſon; becauſe (ſais he) "a Proſe "Period ſhould never conclude like the Line of a "Verſe, (*s*)." But as this refer'd to the Latin Hexameters, and is not the proper Cloſe of Engliſh Verſe, we

(*p*) See his Oration *pro lege Manilia*.——Urbemque &c. L. Luculli Virtute Aſſiduitate, Conſilio, ſummis Obſidionis Periculis, *liberatam*: patefactumque noſtris Legionibus *eſſe pontum*; qui antè populo Romano ex omni aditu *clauſus eſſet*: cæteraſque Urbes Ponti et Cappadociæ permultas, uno aditu atque adventu *eſſe captas*: Regem—ad alios ſe reges atque alias gentes ſupplicem *contuliſſe*: atque hæc omnia, ſalvis populi Romani ſociis atque integris Vectigalibus, *eſſe geſtas*. Satis opinor hoc *eſſe laudis*. Tom. i. p. 311. a.

(*q*) L. ix. c. 4. p. 487.

(*r*) Poteſt, etiamſi minus bene, præponi Anapæſtus. *Ibid.*

(*s*) Ne Dactylus quidem Spondæo bene præponitur, quia finem verſus damnamus in fine Orationis. *Id.* p. 488. The juſtneſs of this Obſervation of *Quintilian* will be conſidered hereafter.

we have not the ſame Reaſon for condemning it, And with us a Spondee preceeded by a Dactyl, ſtands very well at the End of a Sentence.

(7.) The ſame may be ſaid of a Pyrrhic before a Spondee. The rapid Movement of the former being agreeably corrected by the Slowneſs of the latter.

But three ſhort Syllables together ſhould not be often uſed though ſucceeded by a Spondee.

And four or five together is much worſe: for few Ears are reconcileable to the Rapidity of a double Pyrrhic.

(Laſtly.) A Spondee in a Cloſe may ſometimes be very well ſucceeded by itſelf, which makes an extreme ſlow Movement. And ſometimes we may uſe three or four Spondees ſucceſſively, when we mean to fix an Impreſſion by dwelling upon the Words that convey it.

A notable Inſtance of which we have in *Tully*'s Oration againſt *Verres*. In reciting the ignominious Puniſhment of a Roman Citizen, whom *Verres* had ordered to be ſcourged with Rods, he makes Uſe of this Art to raiſe a Horrour of the Fact in the Minds of his Hearers. The Action was ſo vile in itſelf, that the bare Recital of it was ſufficient to inflame their Indignation. Which he more effectually does by

by the Slowneſs with which theſe plain, and to all Appearance, artleſs Expreſſions are pronounced, *Cædebatur virgis Civis Romanus; cum nulla Vox alia iſtius miſeri, inter dolorum crepitumque plagarum, audiebatur, niſi hæc,* CIVIS ROMANUS SUM (*t*).

CHAP. VI.

Of Poetic Proſe.

A Proſe Writer may be ſaid to have a Poetic Stile,

[1.] When he makes Uſe of thoſe Images, Figures or Words, which are too bold and ſtrong to be allowed in any but Poetical Compoſitions; with a View to affect the Paſſions, rather than inform the Judgment; and in all his Paintings, ſeems more attentive to the Goodneſs of his Colours than the Juſtneſs of the Features. This turgid Stile in Poetry is called *Bombaſt*: In Proſe it is ſomething worſe.

[2.] When he binds his Periods with too much Uniformity and Strictneſs, and does not ſufficient-

(*t*) In Verrem, l. v. p. 295. Mr. *Manwaring* indeed affirms that *there can ſcarce be a Union of two Spondees; for the Concluſion is heavy and flat.* The Reaſon he gives for it indeed is ſo; and too weak by far, to ſtand in Oppoſition to the Authority juſt mentioned.

Manwaring on Harmony, p. 26, 27.

ly diverſify his Numbers to throw them out of Poetical Meaſure. And hence it is that thoſe who have dealt much in Verſe, are ſo apt in their Proſe Compoſitions to run into a Poetic Stile.

The Laws of Poetic and Proſaic Numbers are eſſentially different. For in Poetry we are tyed down to thoſe Numbers only which are appropriate to that Species of Verſe we write in, whether Trochaic, Anapæſtic or Iambic, with only thoſe Variations, Licences or Anomalies that are allowed by Cuſtom, and the Authority of the beſt Writers in that Way. But in Proſe we are tyed to no particular Sort of Numbers, but are permitted to make Uſe of any that are harmonious to the Ear, and form a graceful Cadence. And this is done by a judicious Intermixture of the ſhort and long ones; or by introducing more of the one Sort or the other, according as the Subject requires.

This then being the eſſential Difference and juſt Boundary between the Proſe and Poetic Stile, we may hence draw the following Corollaries.

(1.) That it is as great a Fault in Proſe Stile to be too much bound, as it is in the Poetic to be too free. Therefore

(2.) That Foot from which any Species of Poetry takes its Name, ought not to be too often repeated without the Intervention of ſome other; becauſe if it ſucceed itſelf immediately above three or four times, it becomes Verſe, and that Kind of Verſe which takes its Name from that Foot, whether Iambic or Anapæſtic, *&c. e. g.* A late excellent and judicious Writer, whoſe Stile for the moſt Part

is very chaſte and ſweetly numerous, deſcribing the Devotion and Piety of the Son of God, hath theſe Expreſſions; " His Time was divided between De-
" votion and Charity, converſing with God, and
" doing good to Men. The Stars by Night as
" they moved their Rounds, beheld him breathing
" out his Soul to God. The Angels, that wait-
" ed near him with delightful Wonder, obſerved
" a Soul burning with a Flame of Love ſurpaſ-
" ſing theirs (*u*)." Here it is plain that the Iambic Numbers ſucceed one another ſo cloſe, that they give theſe Periods the direct Air of Iambic Verſe.

(3.) The ſame Foot may be often uſed in the ſame Sentence provided any other Foot intervene, ſo as to throw it out of Poetical Meaſure. Thus, a very ſmall Alteration will throw the foregoing Sentences out of their Poetic Movement without the leaſt Damage either to their Sound or Senſe. *e. g.* " The Stars as they moved their nightly Rounds
" beheld him breathing out his devout Soul to God;
" The Angels that waited near him, with Won-
" der and Delight, obſerved a Soul burning with
" a Flame of Love that ſurpaſs'd their own."

 (4.) As

(*u*) See *Grove's* Works, Vol. viii. p. 184.

(4.) As the Laws of Proſe Compoſition will not admit of above three or four of thoſe Feet together which conſtitute any Species of Verſe, much leſs will they admit of an *intire Verſe* in the midſt of a Proſe Sentence.

Becauſe this quite confounds the two different Compoſitions, breaks down the Boundary that was deſigned to part them, violates the Laws of Proſaic Structure, appears too much bound, and diſcovers an Affectation or at leaſt an Art in the Writer, which in Proſe-Compoſition ought by all Means to be concealed. " For (as *Quintilian* (*x*) obſerves) " though Proſe Compoſition is bound by Numbers, " yet it ſhould appear to be perfectly free. And " therefore to conceal the Poetical Meaſure, thoſe " Feet which cloſe a Poetical Verſe (ſais he) ſhould " never cloſe a Proſe Period; nor ſhould thoſe " that begin the former begin the latter. Becauſe " the Ear will then diſtinguiſh it, and the Stile be- " comes too ſtiff and affected. But a Proſe Period " may begin with the ſame Meaſure with which " a Verſe ends, and may end with thoſe Feet with " which a Verſe begins.—To bring in thoſe Num- " bers into Proſe which form Part of a Verſe, is " not right; but to bring in an intire and compleat " Verſe is altogether wrong (*y*)."

Never to begin a Proſe Period with thoſe Numbers that begin a Verſe, nor conclude it with thoſe that cloſe

(*x*) Quamvis enim vincta ſit, tamen ſoluta videri debet Oratio. l. ix, c. 4. p. 484.

(*y*) Verſum in Oratione fieri, multo fædiſſimum eſt, totum: ſicut etiam in parte, deforme: utique ſi pars poſterior in clauſula deprehendatur, aut rurſus prior in Ingreſſu. Nam quod eſt contra, ſæpe etiam decet; quia et cludit interim optime prima pars verſus, --- et ultima verſuum Initio conveniunt Orationis. Id. p. 483.

close a Verse, perhaps may be deemed too severe a Law. But his condemning a compleat Verse in the Midst of Prose (that is, when it is passed upon the Reader for Prose) surely must be just. Of the same Sentiment is *Tully* (*z*).

Now with this Authority I am obliged to encounter that of the learned Mr. *Blackwall*, who is of another Opinion; and produces several Instances both from Greek and Latin Authors (some of which I have thrown into the (*a*) Margin) wherein their Prose Stile appears to run into compleat Verse; with a View to vindicate the Stile of the sacred Writers, where we sometimes find the same Thing (*b*).

But why so much Solicitude to vindicate the Elegance of the Apostles Language? And to ascribe to them an Art which they avowedly neglected, and expressly declared they were above making Use of in their Writings; which were to recommend themselves, not by the Eloquence of their Stile, but the Divinity of their Doctrines? However these Instances are far from proving the Point in Hand, *viz.* that it is

(*z*) —— Quòd Versus in Oratione si efficitur conjunctione Verborum, Vitium est. *De Oratore* l. 3.

Versus sæpe in Oratione per Imprudentiam dicimus: quod vehementer est vitiosum.——Perspicuum est igitur, numeris adstrictam Orationem esse debere, carere Versibus. *Orator* §. 56.

(*a*) Ψελλὲα καὶ στρεπτοὶ καὶ ἵπποι χρυσοχάλινοι.

Xenoph.

Κηρύττειν ὅτι καὶ γείτονα χρηστὸν ἔχειν.

Plutarch.

——Urbem Romam in principio reges habuere.

Tacitus.

(*b*) Πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον.

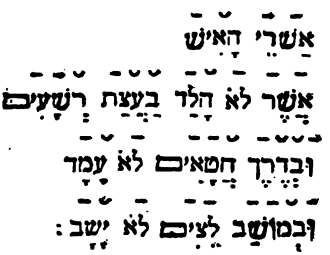
Jam. i. 17.

Καὶ οὗ ἡ φωνὴ γῆν ἐσάλευσε τότε.

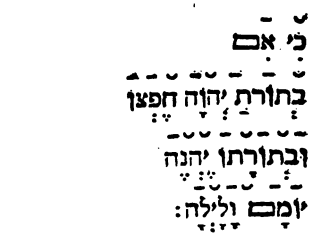
Heb. xii. 26.

See *Blackwall's* sacred Classicks, V. i. p. 180.

I.



II.



Now in theſe Lines the Quantities are ſo diſpoſed as to conſtitute the moſt ſtrong and generous Numbers; which I have diſtinguiſhed by their proper Marks, and which will more readily appear from the following Reſolution of them.

Line

1. Spondee, Iambic.
2. Spondee, Cretic, Anapæſt, Bacchic.
3. Choriambic, Bacchic, Cretic.
4. Cretic, Moloſſus, Cretic.
5. Iambic.
6. Iambic, Cretic, Bacchic.
7. Cretic, Iambic, Anapæſt.
8. Spondee, Iambic, Iambic.

When

When theſe Words are read according to the Quantities here diſtinguiſhed, the Ear will ſoon be judge how much more muſical they are than when they are read without any Regard to them. And this Strength of Numbers, together with the Beauty of the Metaphors, and the Elevation of Thought contained in the Sentence, is that which exalts it to a Poetical Character.

The Tranſlation of it in Imitation of the ſame Proſe-Poetical Stile may be in this Manner.

I.

O bleſſed Man!
Who walks not in the Councel of the Wicked
Nor in the Way of Sinners ſtands,
And in the Seat of Scoffers doth not ſit.

II.

But
His Delight is in Jehovah's Law,
In whoſe Law he meditates
Day and Night.

II. Of this Kind are moſt Monumental Inſcriptions, and Panygerick Characters.

Of the former we may take the following Inſtance.

Hic inhumatur Corpus
MATTHÆI HALE militis;
ROBERTI HALE et JOHANNÆ,
Uxoris ejus, Filii unici
Nati in hâc Parochiâ de *Alderly*,
Primo die Novembris
A. D. 1609.
Denati vero ibidem
Viceſimo quinto die Decembris
A. D. 1676.
Ætatis ſuæ 67.

Here lies enter'd
The Body of MATTHEW HALE, Knight;
The only Son
Of ROBERT HALE and JOAN his Wife:
Who was born in this Pariſh of *Alderly*,
On the firſt Day of November

In

In the Year of our Lord 1609.
And dy'd in the ſame Pariſh,
On the twenty-fifth Day of December,
In the Year of our Lord 1676
Of his Age 67.

Though there is the utmoſt Simplicity of Words in this Inſcription, which Sir *Matthew Hale* ordered to be engraven on his Monument, yet there appears a certain Air of Dignity in them, owing to the Feet that compoſe them, which are all of the moſt generous Quality. A plain Inſtance of the Power of Numbers, even in the moſt common and ſimple Language.

And as an Inſtance of Panygerical Deſcriptions, which are generally drawn up in this Proſe-Poetical Stile, we may take the following Character of the late King *William*.

He was,
But is no more,
The Head, Heart and Hand
Of the Confederacy;
The Aſſertor of Liberty,

The Deliverer of Nations,
The Support of the *Empire*,
The Bulwark of *Holland*,
The Preſerver of *Britain*,
The Reducer of *Ireland*,
And the Terrour of *France*.
His Thoughts were wiſe, ſerene and ſecret,
His Words few and faithful,
His Actions many and heroick;
His Government without Tyranny,
His Juſtice without Rigour,
And his Religion without Superſtition.

He was

Magnanimous without Pride,
Valiant without Violence,
Victorious without Triumph,
Active without Wearineſs,
Cautious without Fear,
And Meritorious without Thanks.

Though

Though there be a few weak and faultering Feet in this Panygerick, particularly in the fourth and ſixth Lines, yet they are abundantly compenſated by the Energy of Thought, the Succinctneſs of the Language, and the Variety of Contraſt, which makes the Compoſition ſo beautiful. It is not limited to any Feet or Meaſure, and therefore is not Verſe; but is diſtinguiſhed in general by its harmonious Numbers, ſublime Sentiments, with a peculiar terſe, ſtrong and lively Turn of Expreſſion which raiſes it above Proſe, and therefore is a fit Specimen of Proſaic Poetry.

III. Romances and Novels are often writ in this mixt Language, between Poetry and Proſe; and hence it is ſometimes called the *Romantick Stile.* Of which we may take the following Inſtance in the Words of *Alexander* when he took his Leave of *Statira.*—"Madam (ſaid he) I am forced to leave "you; but though I go from hence, my Thoughts "ſhall not be ſeperated from you; perhaps I may "one Day come back to lay all my Victories at "your Feet; and may the Gods grant, I may be "as able to conquer your Mind, as I am to con-"quer Kingdoms; and that I may find you as "much ſoftened at my Return, as I leave you ob-"durate at my Departure (*e*)."

(Laſtly.

(*e*) Caſſandra.

(Laſtly.) Of this Kind alſo I conceive were the antient *Dithyrambics*; or thoſe Hymns which were formerly ſung in Honour of *Bacchus*. Which were a very wild and looſe Compoſition, and as full of Tranſport and Rage as the drunken God they celebrated. Of theſe we have no Remains extant: But as *Horace* ſais they were tyed to no poetical Numbers (*f*), I take them to be a Species of this Proſaic Poetry.

Before I conclude this Chapter it may not be amiſs juſt to obſerve the vaſt Difference between the antient and modern Poetry.

The moſt antient Poetic Compoſitions were confined neither to Rhime, Number or Meaſure; and were nothing but juſt ſublime Sentiments clothed in ſtrong figurative Language. Such was the Oriental Poetry. This was afterward reduced to Meaſures and Lines; but both very various; the Meaſures of no determinate Sort, and the Lines of no determinate Length. As in Pindaric Odes. After this the Poetic Stile was bound to ſtill ſtricter Laws; and confined to a certain Meaſure, and a certain Number of Feet in every Line, *e. g.* to five diſſyllable Feet or ten Syllables; as in *Milton*'s Verſe. It was afterwards laid under a further Reſtriction, and ſubject not only to Meaſure but Rhime; and every other Line was to conclude with a Sound ſimilar to that which cloſed the preceeding Line. And when the Poetry was divided into Stanzas, each Stanza conſiſting of four Lines of eight and ſix

(*f*) Laureâ donandus Apollinari,
Seu per audaces nova Dithyrambos
Verba devolvit, numeriſque fertur
Lege ſolutis.

Hor. l. iv. Od. 2.

ſix Syllables alternately, they were to correſpond in alternate Rhime. And be the Lines ever ſo ſhort they muſt End with a ſimilar Sound; and ſometimes the two rhiming Syllables are found both in the ſame Line; nay according to the Judgment and Taſte of ſome People, that is the beſt Poetry where the Numbers are leaſt varyed and the Rhime moſt exact and frequent. Which lays it under the moſt miſerable Reſtraint, hampers it with the moſt unreaſonable Fetters, cramps a true Poetic Fancy, and whilſt it keeps the Attention fixt to the Structure and Sound of Words, takes it off from that which is the very Life and Spirit of all true Poetical Compoſition, *viz.* ſublime Thought and ſtrong Language, it pleaſes the Ear at the Expence of our Underſtanding, and puts us off with Sound inſtead of Senſe.

If the antient Poetry was too lax in its Numbers, the modern is certainly too ſtrict. The juſt Medium between theſe two Extreams ſeems to be that which *Milton* hath choſen for his Poem, *viz.* the Penthameter Verſe with the mixt Iambic Meaſure, free from the Shackle of Rhime; in which the Numbers are neither too free nor too confined; but are muſical enough to entertain the Ear, and at the ſame Time leave Room enough to expreſs the ſtrongeſt Thought in the beſt and boldeſt Language.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Compoſition of ſome of our beſt Engliſh Writers conſidered with Regard to their Numbers.

ARCHBISHOP *Sharp*, whoſe Sermons for Perſpicuity of Stile, Solidity of Senſe, and Piety of Spirit, are deſervedly admired, was nevertheleſs very negligent of his Rhythmus. We are frequently hampered with four or five ſhort Syllables together, *e. g.* "This I muſt confeſs is a very "melancholy and unpleaſing Argument (*g*)." Which he might with Eaſe have prevented, only by putting the Word *Unpleaſing* firſt. Again, "We are not "much degenerated from the Purity of Chriſtianity "as to Doctrinals (*h*)." And what is worſe, he often cloſes with a double Pyrrhic. *e. g.* "I ſpeak "of the national Sins, the reigning Vices of the "Times, the Miſcarriages that are ſo prevailing and "ſo common that a Publick Guilt is contracted "by them, and the whole People may juſtly ſhare "in the Puniſhment of them (*i*)."

Arch-

(*g*) Vol. ii. p. 6.
(*h*) Ibid.
(*i*) Id. p. 7.

Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* hath all the Simplicity and Perſpicuity of the former, but is much more harmonious. He had a nice Ear and a clear Head; was happy in the Sweetneſs of his Numbers, an inimitable Eaſe of Stile and Solidity of Argument. For theſe he hath been ever admired, and one unharmonious Sentence picked out of three Volumes in Folio, I believe will not be deemed Proof ſufficient to overthrow ſo well eſtabliſhed a Reputation. And therefore I cannot help thinking that the Cenſure lately paſſed upon him by a very elegant Writer is ſomewhat too ſevere (*k*). If the Archbiſhop (whom no Man of Taſte can read without Pleaſure) be defective in any Thing, it is in Force and Spirit, and when this ſeems to be moſt wanting, it is oftentimes only concealed by a peculiar Simplicity of Language. Let us take the following Paſſage for an Inſtance,——"But of all Doctrines in the World, "it (*i. e.* the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation) is pe-"culiarly incapable of being proved by a Miracle. "For if a Miracle were wrought for the Proof of "it, the very ſame Aſſurance which a Man hath "of the Truth of the Miracle, he hath of the "Falſhood of the Doctrine, that is, the clear Evi-

"dence

(*k*) See *Fitzoſborn*'s Letters, Let. xxiv.

It is without Doubt altogether as wrong to condemn a good Compoſition for here and there a rough Period, as it is to applaud a bad Compoſition for here and there a good one. No Man, I believe, will diſpute the late Lord *B*——*k*'s Claim to the Rank of a fine Writer; yet even his Stile is not always free from ill-turned Periods and a bad Diſpoſition of Numbers. —— *By never ſaying what is unfit for him to ſay, he will never hear what is unfit for him to hear; by never doing what is unfit for him to do, he will never ſee what is unfit for him to ſee.*—— Again, *If the Heart of a Prince be not corrupt, theſe Truths will find an eaſy Ingreſſion through the Underſtanding to it.* Letters on the Spirit of Patriotiſm, &c. p. 218, 223.——Who does not ſee that the former of theſe Periods has too much of the low affected Turn and Jingle of the laſt Century to pleaſe in this; and that the cloſing Numbers in the latter are halting, weak and unharmonious.

" dence of his Senſes for both. For that there is " a Miracle wrought to prove, *that what he ſees* " *in the Sacrament is not Bread, but the Body of* " *Chriſt*, he hath only the Evidence of his Senſes: " And he hath the very ſame Evidence to prove, " *that what he ſees in the Sacrament is not the* " *Body of Chriſt, but Bread.* So that the Argu- " ment for Tranſubſtantiation, and the Objection " againſt it, do juſt ballance one another; and " where the Weights in both Scales are equal, it " is impoſſible that the one ſhould weigh down " the other; and conſequently Tranſubſtantiation " is not to be proved by a Miracle; for that would " be, *to prove to a Man by ſomething that he ſees,* " *that he does not ſee what he ſees* (*l*).

Never was there a more perfect Maſter of Numbers, both in Poetry and Proſe, than Mr. *Addiſon*. *Fair Roſamond* will always be a Proof of the one, and his *Spectators* a laſting Monument of the other. It is no leſs needleſs than it would be endleſs to ſpecify the particular Beauties of his Language, which at once excels in Purity, Perſpicuity and Force; and in which it is equally difficult to find either Defect or Redundance. In a Word, the beſt Way to acquire a chaſte, expreſſive and numerous Stile is to read and copy him.

Mr. *Gordon* is full of Force and Fire; his Stile nervous and pointed; well turned for Raillery, and far above the common Level. His Numbers moſt ſtrong and generous; happily adapted to pleaſe the Ear and reach the Heart. He hath *Seneca*'s Point without his Poverty, *Tully*'s Spirit without his Profuſeneſs,

(*l*) *Tillotſon*'s Works, Vol. i. p. 179. Serm. 21.

ſyſeneſs, and *Demoſthenes*'s Thunder without his Lightning. For a Specimen we may take the following Paragraph; where ſpeaking of the formidable Tribe of Critics, he ſais thus,—" The common " Fraternity of Writers (a moſt *unbrotherly* Fra- " ternity) furniſh a Swarm of Critics. For almoſt " all Writers are Critics in the rigorous, but wrong " Senſe of the Word; and are therefore ready to " run down all ſuperior Productions; and to ſhew " the leaſt Mercy to the moſt Merit. If any Work " merit Praiſe, this is to them ſufficient Provocation to " decry it. I have known ſome of them appear fond " of a Book, till they ſaw it ſucceed, then grow " mad at its Succeſs, and wondered at the fooliſh " Taſte of the Town. As I have received many " Proofs of their good-will, I know their Candour. " I have found ſome ſo vain, that no good Treat- " ment could reach their Merit, ſome ſo craving " as only to be beholden for Favours to come; o- " thers who have praiſed me too copiouſly without " any Court or Temptation from me, have " abuſed me as plentifully without being once " offended by me: Others, ſo little Scrupulous as " to revile me for Writings which I never wrote. I " can produce as high a Panegyric as ever was made " upon Man, and as vile a Libel, both in Print, and " both from the ſame Author; the former without " my ever having ſeen him, and the latter without " ever having wronged him; nay, after I had done " him a thouſand good Offices. I have ſupported an " Author for a whole Winter, and have had his Thanks " next Summer in a furious printed Invective (*m*)."

(*m*) See Introduction to a Tranſlation of *Salluſt*, p. 18, 19.

My Lord *Shaftſbury*'s Numbers, if compared with the two Authors laſt mentioned, are not ſo ſweet as thoſe of the firſt, nor ſo ſtrong as thoſe of the laſt. His Talent is delicate Ridicule, but his Stile not very fit for it; which is rather weak and fluent than harmoniouſly ſtrong. He wears a perpetual Face of Pleaſantry, and loves to laugh; but has ſometimes the Misfortune to laugh out of Seaſon, and draw the Smile upon himſelf. His Expreſſions are now and then no leſs Quaint than his Humour; but the Numbers of the former as ill-matched as the Subjects of the latter. However he hath gained the Character of a fine Author, which I apprehend he owes more to the Dignity of his Name, than that of his Writings. He affects Delicacy, but does not always preſerve it. Of which the following Lines are a Proof.—" It is obſervable that the " Writers of *Memoirs* and *Eſſays* are chiefly Sub- " ject to this *frothy* Diſtemper. Nor can it be " doubted that this is the true Reaſon why theſe " Gentlemen entertain the World ſo laviſhly with " what relates to themſelves. Who indeed can " endure to hear an Emperick talk of his own Con- " ſtitution, how he governs and manages it, what " Diet agrees beſt with it, and what his Practice " *is with himſelf.* The Proverb, no doubt, is very " juſt, *Phyſician cure thyſelf.* Yet methinks one " ſhould have but an ill Time, to be preſent at " theſe *bodily Operations.* Nor is the Reader in " Truth *any* better entertained, when he is obliged " to aſſiſt at the *experimental Diſcuſſions* of his *practi-*

" *ſing*

" *ſing* Author, who all the while is in reality doing no " better than *taking his Phyſick in Publick* (*n*)."

Biſhop *Atterbury* was doubtleſs a great Genius, and a fine Writer. No one diſputes his Claim to Eloquence. His Numbers are well choſen, beautiful and ſtrong as the Senſe they convey; his Expreſſion pure, his Cadence ſmooth, his Phraſe eaſy, and his Cloſes full of Harmony. As a Specimen of which, take the following Extract from a Letter of his to Mr. *Pope*.—" I thank you for a Sight " of your Verſes; and with the Freedom of an " honeſt, though perhaps injudicious Friend, muſt " tell you; that though I could like ſome of them " if they were any Body's elſe but yours, yet as " they are yours, and to be owned as ſuch, I " can ſcarce like any of them. Not but that the " four firſt Lines are good, eſpecially the ſecond " Couplet; and might if followed by four others " as good, give Reputation to a Writer of a leſs " eſtabliſhed Fame. But from you I expect ſome- " thing of a more perfect Kind, and which, the " oftener it is read, the more it will be admired. " When you barely exceed other Writers, you fall " much beneath yourſelf (*o*).

Having

(*n*) See Characteriſticks, Vol. i. p. 163,

(*o*) See Letters to and from Dr. *Atterbury* Biſhop of *Rochester*, Lett. 24.

Having mentioned Mr. *Pope*, I muſt produce him next. He would have ſhone no leſs in Proſe than Poetry, had he applyed himſelf as much to the former as he did to the latter. This appears from his Letters; where you ſee nothing of the Poet, none of thoſe fanciful Images or excurſive Flights, ſo natural to thoſe who have dealt much in Verſe; but all is ſmooth eaſy Language, ſtrong and ſolid Senſe. His Numbers are purely Proſaic, but flow with a Sweetneſs peculiar to one whoſe Soul was all Harmony. Writing to his Friend, the foremen-tioned Biſhop, when under Diſgrace, he ſais—" Once " more I write to you as I promiſed; and this once " I fear will be the laſt! The Curtain will ſoon be " drawn between my Friend and me, and nothing " left but to wiſh you a long good Night.—If you " retain any Memory of the paſt, let it only Image " to you what hath pleaſed you beſt; ſometimes " preſent a Dream of an abſent Friend, or bring " you back an agreeable Converſation. But upon " the whole, I hope you will think leſs of the Time " paſt, than the future; as the former hath been " leſs kind to you than the latter infallibly will be. " Do not envy the World your Studies; they will " tend to the Benefit of Men againſt whom you

can

" can have no Complaint; I mean of all Poſterity.
" And perhaps at your Time of Life, nothing elſe
" is worth your Care. What is every Year of a
" wiſe Man's Life, but a Cenſure or Critique on the
" paſt? Thoſe whoſe Date is ſhorteſt, live long
" enough to laugh at one half of it. The Boy
" deſpiſes the Infant, the Man the Boy, the Phi-
" loſopher both, and the Chriſtian all (*p*)."

I have marked the Cloſes, that the Reader may obſerve the Numbers to which they owe their Sweetneſs.

I ſhould tire my Readers and myſelf, were I to mention half our Engliſh Authors whoſe Writings have done an Honour to our Language, and who owe their Fame for Eloquence chiefly to their Skill in Numbers. But it would juſtly be deemed a want of Taſte or Memory, not to mention in this Number the excellent Mr. *M——th*; who hath lately obliged the World with a Collection of Letters full of fine Senſe and fine Language. All the Spirit, Eaſe and Elegance of original Epiſtles enter into his Tranſlation of *Pliny*'s: Where the Reader is at once charmed with a Beauty of Thought and Diction, ſcarce to be paralleled by any but thoſe of *Fitzoſborn*. Taking Occaſion from a Paſſage in *Pliny* to recommend Epiſtolary Writing, he ſais, —" It

(*p*) Id. Letter xxiii.

—" It appears from this and ſome other Paſſages
" in thoſe Letters, that the Art of Epiſtolary Wri-
" ing was eſteemed by the Romans, in the Num-
" ber of liberal and polite Accompliſhments. It
" ſeems indeed to have formed Part of their Educa-
" tion; as in the Opinion of Mr. *Lock* it well de-
" ſerves to have a Share in ours.——It is to be won-
" dered that we have ſo few Writers in our own
" Language, who deſerve to be pointed out as Mo-
" dels upon ſuch an Occaſion.—A late diſtinguiſh-
" ed Genius treats the very Attempt as ridiculous,
" and profeſſeſs himſelf *a mortal Enemy to what*
" *they call a fine Letter.* His Averſion however
" was not ſo ſtrong but he knew how to conquer
" it when he thought proper; and the Letter which
" cloſes his Correſpondence with Biſhop *Atterbu-*
" *ry* (*q*), is perhaps the moſt genteel and manly Ad-
" dreſs that was ever pen'd to a Friend in Diſ-
" grace (*r*)."

A nice

(*q*) Referring to the Letter out of which I have taken the Extract above.

(*r*) See *Pliny*'s Letters, B. 2. Let. 13. not. (a).

A nice Ear will ſoon perceive a Difference in the Stile of the two laſt mentioned Writers. They are both numerous, both harmonious, but in a different Way. The Firſt is more Succinct and Nervous, the Lattermore Diffuſe and Flowing. And a judicious Reader will as ſoon diſcern the Cauſe to which this Difference is owing, *viz.* becauſe the one deals moſt in Spondaic and Iambic, the other in Dactylic and Anapæſtic Numbers.

I muſt not omit here to mention Mr. *Smith*; who (if I miſtake not) hath tranſlated *Longinus* in the true *Sublime:* And ſeems as much inſpired by the Spirit of his Author, as his Author himſelf was by the Nature of his Subject: And both were a happy Specimen of the Art they taught. And though he ſpeaks in very diminutive Terms of the Rules the Antients laid down to attain a numerous Compoſition (which he owns *Cicero* ſtudy'd and practiſed (*s*)) and apprehends they will throw too great a Reſtraint and Incumbrance on our Language, yet his own Stile is, I think, a Proof of the Contrary. For whatever Averſion he might have to the Rules of this Art, he knew how to practiſe them with very good Succeſs. For condoling the Publick on the Loſs they have ſuſtained by that of *Longinus*'s Treatiſe on the Paſſions, he ſais,—" the Excellence

" of this on the *Sublime* makes us regret the more

" the Loſs of the other; and inſpires us with a deep
" Reſentment of the irreparable Depredations com-
" mitted on Learning and the valuable Productions

" of Antiquity, by *Goths*, and Monks, and Time.

I " There

(*s*) See his Notes and Obſervations on *Longinus*, Sect. 39.

" There, in all Probability we ſhould have beheld
" the ſecret Springs and Movements of the Soul
" diſcloſed to View. There, we ſhould have been
" taught, if Rule and Obſervation in this Caſe can
" teach, to elevate an Audience into Joy, or melt
" them into Tears. There, we ſhould have learn'd
" if ever, to work upon every Paſſion, to put every
" Heart, every Pulſe in Emotion. At preſent we
" muſt ſit down contented under the Loſs, and be
" ſatisfyed with this invaluable Piece on the Sublime,
" which with much Hazard hath eſcaped a Wreck,
" and gain'd a Port though not undamag'd (*t*)."

Sir *William Temple*'s nervous and maſculine Stile is a good deal owing to the ſtrong, majeſtick Numbers of his Compoſition.—" To find any Felicity,
" or take any Pleaſure in the greateſt Advantages of
" Honour and Fortune, a Man muſt be in Health.
" Who would not be Covetous, and with Reaſon,
" if this could be purchaſed with Gold? Who not
" Ambitious, if it were at the Command of Power,
" or reſtored by Honour. But alaſs! A white Staff
will

(*t*) Notes and Obſervations on *Longinus*, ad fin.

" will not help gouty Feet to walk, better than a " common Cane; nor a blue Ribband bind up a " Wound ſo well as a Fillet. The glitter of Gold " or of Diamonds will but hurt ſore Eyes, inſtead " of curing them. And an aking Head will be no " more eaſed by wearing a Crown, than a com- " mon Night-Cap (*u*)."

I know not how to conclude this Chapter without obſerving, that the Tranſlators of our Engliſh Bible are uſually very happy in their Numbers; which are moſtly ſolemn, majeſtic and grave as the ſacred Subjects they treat of. For an Inſtance, let us take the four firſt Verſes of Saint *John*'s Goſpel.

" In the Be|ginning was| the Word, | and the " Word | was with God, | and the Word | was God.

" The ſame | was in the | Begin|ning with God.

" All Things were | made by him, | and without " him was | not a|ny Thing made | that was made.

" In him | was Life, | and the Life | was the Light | " of Man."

(*u*) See his Miſcellanies, Part iii. p. 110:

To the forementioned Writers eminent for numerous Compoſition I might juſtly add, Dr. *Middleton*, Dr. *Burnet*, Mr. *Geddes*, Mr. *Balguy*, Mr. *Grove*, Dr. *Watts*, and Mr. *Hervey*. But the Language of the two laſt, is, for the moſt Part, too Poetical.

A Man muſt have no Ear, no Taſte, that does not perceive in this Paragraph, with how much Harmony the Subject and Numbers accord. And perhaps there is no Paſſage in any Writings ſacred or profane, that exceeds it in Sublimity of Sentiment and Dignity of Diction.

By this Time, I hope we have a diſtinct Idea of what is generally called a *numerous Compoſition.* It hath no reference to a Writer's Sentiments: For good Thoughts may be, and very often are, expreſſed in a very bad Manner. It does not refer to the Propriety of Expreſſion: For the propereſt Words are ſometimes harſh and diſcordant; and Nonſenſe may be muſical. Nor is a numerous Stile only a ſmooth flowing Stile, as ſome imagine, but an harmonious and muſical Stile. Or ſuch an Arrangement and Diſpoſition of the Words, as gives the Ear a Pleaſure when they are pronounced. The Sound of the Hautboy and Trumpet is muſical as well as that of the Harp and Lute: But the Muſick of the one is loud and ſtrong, that of the other ſoft and ſweet. For there is as great a Diverſity in muſical Numbers, as there is in muſical Notes; and as great a Variety of Harmony ariſing from the different Diſpoſition of them: So *G—n* and *Temple* are excellent for numerous Compoſition as well as *Tillotſon* and *M——th*: But the Numbers of the former are more maſculine and ſtrong, thoſe of the latter more ſoft and flowing; both equally Harmonious.

And from hence alſo we may obſerve not only a great Difference in the Stile or Compoſition of Writers, but the Cauſe of that Difference. The

ſoft

ſoft and flowing Stile ariſes from the great Number of ſhort Quantities or rapid Feet, and the ſtrong and maſculine Stile from the long Quantities and grave Numbers which compoſe it. For it is the Numbers with which the Periods and the ſeveral Parts of them cloſe, that gives the particular Diſtinction and Air to the Structure of the Sentence. And according to theſe an Author may be ſaid (in Proſe as well as Verſe) to write in the *Dactylic* or *Iambic* Meaſure; *i. e.* according as he cloſes moſt frequently with Dactyles or Iambics: (ſo *Tully* ſais that *Ephormus* the Orator followed the Dactylic (*x*) Meaſure) For every Author naturally runs into one of theſe different Meaſures more than the other; as he does into the Uſe of ſome particular Words and Phraſes: And theſe two Things (though the former is not ſo often obſerved as the latter) are the Cauſe that a Man is no leſs diſtinguiſhed by his Stile than his Hand-Writing.

CHAP. IX.

Containing certain Rules proper to be obſerved in Order to acquire a numerous Stile.

Rule I. FURNISH yourſelf with a Copia of equivalent Words, or Words that convey juſt the ſame Idea; that you may have it in your Power to ſubſtitute one of a good Number in the

(*x*) *Orator*, p. 166. (a).

the Room of another that is a bad one, and to chuſe that which beſt ſuits the Rhythmus, of which a good Ear will ſoon be Judge.

This Rule *Quintilian* ſais was obſerved by ſome in his Time, who for this Purpoſe got a Store of ſuch Words by Heart (*y*). But he obſerves that ſuch a Furniture is beſt provided by a careful Attention to the Manner of Speaking and Writing uſed by the beſt Maſters of Language; becauſe by this Means we ſhall know not only the beſt Words but their beſt Situation (*z*). And of two Words equally proper and expreſſive, that which contains the beſt Number is for the moſt Part to be prefered.

Rule II. When four, five, or more ſhort Syllables come together, you may Part them by inſerting amongſt them ſome expletive Particle containing a long Quantity; which if it do not ſtrengthen the Senſe, will at leaſt ſerve to meliorate the Meaſure.

Take for Example the following Sentence; *This Doctrine I apprehend to be erroneous and of a pernicious Tendency.* Here too many ſhort Quantities follow one another ſucceſſively. But ſuppoſe it altered thus; *This Doctrine I take to be not only falſe, but of very pernicious Tendency*; and let any good Ear judge to which the Preference is due.

The ſame Thing may be done in Order to prevent the Colliſion of two hard Sounds, which (tho' the

(*y*) Equidem ſcio quoſdam collecta quæ Idem ſignificarent Vocabula ſolitos ediſcere, quo facilius occurreret unum ex pluribus. l. x. c. 1.
(*z*) *Ibid.*

the Number be good yet) require ſome Pains to be diſtinctly pronounced, without grating on the Ear. For this Reaſon the Tranſlators of the New Teſtament render the Words in *Luke* x. 11. thus; *even the very Duſt of your City which cleaveth on us, we* DO *wipe off againſt you.* Not *we wipe*; which are Sounds ſo ready to run into one another, that they require ſome Care and Pauſe to keep them aſunder (*a*).

Rule III. An *Illipſis* will often help the Rhythmus, by contracting two Syllables into one, as *'tis, don't*; for *it is, do not.*

And to mend the Meaſure we may often leave out not only ſome Syllables in a Word, but ſome whole Words in a Sentence, provided we do not thereby weaken or obſcure the Senſe. So the Adverb *that*, and the Particle *the*, may be either expreſſed or underſtood, according as it beſt ſuits the Run of the Words. *e. g.* I ſee *that* nothing can be done to ſave either *the* Man or *the* Horſe. Better thus, *I ſee nothing can be done to ſave either Man or Horſe.*

Nay, for the ſame End an Author may drop, not only a whole Word, but Part of a Period, and leave the Senſe imperfect in ſome obvious Caſes. And a ſeaſonable Silence, or imperfect Speech (a Figure which the Rhetoricians (*b*) call a *Suppreſſion*) often ſerves at once to ſtrengthen both the Meaſure and Sentiment. As in that Expreſſion in *Terence, Liber Loris!*—"To cauſe a Period then to "run with a greater Smoothneſs and juſt Cadency, "an Author will find himſelf obliged, not only "to

(*a*) *Say*'s Eſſay on Numbers, *&c.* p. 115.
(*b*) *Blackwall*'s Introduction to the Claſſicks, p. 185.

" to ſtrip it of all Superfluities, but even to leave " out ſomething in the Senſe, which the Reader " muſt neceſſarily ſupply from his own Invention. " *Demoſthenes*, but eſpecially *Thucydides*, abound with " Inſtances of this. Nor is a Reader of Taſte at " all offended with it; on the Contrary he is " pleaſed with the Compliment paid his Under- " ſtanding (*c*)."—Theſe laſt Words exemplify the Rule we are upon; and run much better as they are, than if they had been—" He is pleaſed with " the Compliment *which is* paid *to* his Under- " ſtanding."

Rule IV. A proper Uſe of Rhetorical Figures is ſometimes a great Help to a numerous Compoſition; and when they are well choſen and pertinently applied, they ſerve at once to exalt the Senſe and adorn the Language (*d*).

But here the following Things muſt be carefully remembered.

(1.) That the Figures we Uſe be neither obſcure nor impertinent. Which will only darken or perplex the Senſe (*e*).

(2.) That they be not too bold and ſtrong. For that ſavours too much of Poetry.

(3.) That they be not ſtiff or unnatural. Which diſcovers a ridiculous Affectation.

(4.) That

(*c*) *Geddes* on Compoſition, p. 5.

(*d*) Sed et figuris mutare et caſus et numeros, quorum Varietas frequenter gratia Compoſitionis adſtricta, etiam ſine numero ſolet eſſe jucunda. *Quintil.* l. ix. c. 4.

(*e*) See *Fitzoſborne*'s Letters. Let 51.

(4.) That they be not too frequent. Becauſe that will tire and ſurfeit the Reader; who does not love to have more Sauſe than Meat.

This was Mr. *Cowley*'s great Fault, who runs us quite down with his Rhetorical Wit, and gives us no Time to breathe (*f*).

(5.) That they be introduced ſuddenly without any previous Form or Notice. For nothing is more agreeable than to be *ſurpriſed* with Pleaſure. And when ſuch figurative Forms of Speech give a Harmony to the Stile (as they often do) the Pleaſure is ſtill augmented.

Rule V. A Tranſpoſition of Words is very frequently uſed for the Sake of a good Rhythm and emphatical Cloſe.

(*d*) Speaking of a Perſon who had publiſhed a Paltry Poem in his Name, he purſues him with the following exquiſite Raillery. —— "I wondered very much how one who could be ſo fooliſh to write ſo "ill Verſes, ſhould be ſo wiſe to ſet them forth as *another Man's* "rather than *his own*; though perhaps he might have made a better "Choice, and not fathered the *Baſtard* upon ſuch a Perſon, whoſe "Stock of Reputation is, I fear, little enough for Maintenance of his "own numerous *Legitimate* Offſpring of that Kind. It would have "been much leſs injurious, if it had pleaſed the Author, to put forth "ſome of my Writings under his *own name*, rather than his own un-"der *mine*. He had been in that a more pardonable Plagiary, and "had done leſs wrong by *Robbery*, than he does by ſuch a *Bounty*. "— Our own *coarſe Clothes* are like to become us better than thoſe of "another Man's, though never ſo *rich*. But theſe, to ſay the Truth, "were ſo *beggarly*, that I myſelf was aſhamed to wear them. It was "in vain for me that I avoided cenſure by the Concealment of my "own Writings, if my Reputation could be thus *executed in Effigy*. "And impoſſible it is for any good name to be in ſafety, if the ma-"lice of Witches have the Power to conſume and deſtroy it in an I-"mage of their own making. This indeed was ſo ill made, and ſo "*unlike*, that I hope the *Charm* took no effect."

Preface to his Poems.

This is the true Reaſon that we find ſuch a Change of the natural Order of Words ſo common in all Languages, eſpecially in the *Latin*; and in the beſt Writers, eſpecially in *Cicero:* Who often poſtpones to the very laſt, that Verb or emphatical Word on which the whole Senſe of the Period depends.

But two Things are obſervable in him, in which he ought to be imitated, *viz.*

(1.) He does not leave the Mind in the mean Time altogether at a Loſs for the general Senſe, but ſo diſpoſes of the intermediate Words, that we may readily gueſs at his Meaning before it be fully expreſſed.

(2.) When the long looked for Word is come, it is generally more elegant and emphatical than even the Mind or the Ear, ſo long ſuſpended could expect; and throws ſuch a ſudden and ſurpriſing Light and Beauty upon the whole, as more than compenſates the Pain of that Suſpence.

Inſtances of this are obvious and numberleſs. Without the former, the Senſe would be obſcured; and without the latter, the Mind would ſuffer a Diſappointment, which no Harmony or Cloſe could recompence.

Therefore

Rule VI. Let the Sentence always cloſe, if poſſible, not only with a good Number, but an emphatical Word.

By which I don't mean that the emphatical Word muſt of Neceſſity be the very laſt: If it be within three or four Syllables of it, it may do as well, and

and be conſidered as the Cloſe. Nor are the Words for the Sake of this Elegance to be unnaturally tranſpoſed, ſo as to darken the Senſe or ſpoil the other Numbers: But you ſhould keep it in View, and when it is natural nothing is more beautiful.

To this may be added another Thing which bears ſome Reſemblance to it, *viz.* To cloſe with a Word that ſtands in a lively Reference or Contraſt to ſome other in the ſame Sentence.—This will always be agreeable, eſpecially if both Words be Emphatical. *e. g.* " Unhappy Man, who obtaining the *Pleaſure* " he ſo long purſued, finds himſelf at laſt poſſeſſed " of *Pain!*"

Rule VII. Remark the moſt beautiful Cloſes, as well as the propereſt Words, in the Writings and Converſation of thoſe who moſt excel in Elegance of Stile.

In this Reſpect you will reap great Advantage from a good Acquaintance with the Authors before mentioned, and many others that are equally excellent in the ſame Way. Becauſe, as *Quintilian* takes Notice (*g*), you will there obſerve not only the beſt Words but their beſt Places; for a good Word miſplaced ſpoils the Harmony as much as a good Word miſapplyed does the Senſe.

And ſince there is a great Diverſity in the Stile, of good Writers, ſome being more copious and flowing, and others more conciſe and nervous, be moſt converſant with what you like beſt; becauſe *that* you will be moſt apt to imitate. Nor ſhould you deal much in thoſe Authors who are quite negligent of their Rhythm, unleſs the Importance of the

(*g*) L. x. c. 1.

Senſe compenſate the Want of Harmony; for if you have a good Ear they will diſguſt you; and if none, will betray you into an imitation of their rugged Stile, which will diſguſt others.

And when you have gained a Competent Knowledge of the Rhythmical Theory, it will be pleaſant to obſerve how naturally a good Ear leads the moſt illiterate Perſons in their common Speech to the Choice of the beſt Numbers, who are intirely ignorant of all the Rules and Principles of numerous Compoſition; and how plainly Nature exemplifys thoſe Rules which were originally invented for the Imitation of it.

Rule VIII. Let your firſt Care be a clear and ſtrong Expreſſion of the Sentiment; what is rough and harſh in the Numbers may be rectifyed afterwards.

But never change a proper, ſtrong, expreſſive Word that is unharmonious, for one that does not convey the Idea ſo fully though it contains a better Number. For this Reaſon, becauſe Senſe is always to be prefered to Sound, and the Mind to be entertained before the Ear (*b*). And ſpecial Care muſt be taken that a too ſcrupulous Attention to the ſmooth Flow of the Period do not render the Senſe confuſed or the Stile enervate.

Rule IX. Do not uſe always the ſame Sort of Numbers, be they ever ſo good; the Ear will ſoon perceive the Uniformity and be offended at it (*i*).

You

(*b*) In univerſum autem, ſi ſit neceſſe, duram potius atque aſperam compoſitionem malim eſſe, quam effeminatam et enervem, qualis apud multos. — Et certe nullum aptum et idoneum Verbum permutemus gratiâ lenitatis. *Quint.* l. ix. c. 4. ad finem.

(*i*) Ac ne tam bona quidem ulla erit, ut debeat eſſe continua, et in eoſdem ſemper pedes ire. Nam et verſificandi genus eſt, unam legem omnibus

You ſhould endeavour not only to introduce the beſt Numbers, but thoſe that beſt ſuit the Subject they deſcribe; and vary them as that varies. *e. g.* Grave and ſolemn Subjects ſhould move in ſlow and ſtately *Spondees*; Paſſions run off quick in *Pyrrhic*; what is ſtrong and alarming is beſt expreſſed in *Iambic*, and what is ſoft and tender in *Trochaic* Meaſure: For a conſtant Uniformity of Meaſure, though ever ſo ſweet and fluent, ſatiates and tires the Ear. This is no leſs true in Proſaic than Poetic Compoſition.

Rule X. Let your Compoſition be ſo free, natural, and eaſy, that you may not ſeem to have any Regard to your Numbers at all.

The foregoing Rules you ſhould carefully follow, but the Reader muſt not obſerve that you do ſo. This Art of all others, requires the greateſt Art to conceal it. An Orator will certainly miſs of his Aim if his Hearers once ſuſpect, that by bribing their Ears he means to make his Way to their Hearts (*k*).

As Art is an Imitation of Nature, *that* is the moſt perfect Art which reſembles Nature moſt. And what is unnatural, be it ever ſo much laboured will have no Power either to pleaſe or perſwade. And ſometimes it requires the greateſt Labour not to ſeem elaborate (*l*).

Theſe

omnibus Sermonibus dare: et id cum manifeſta Affectatio eſt (cujus rei maxime cavenda ſuſpicio eſt) tum etiam ſimilitudine tædium ac ſatietatem creat. *Ibid.*

(*k*) Amittitque et fidem et affectus motuſque omnes qui eſt in hac cura deprehenſus: nec poteſt ei credere aut propter eum dolere et iraſci Judex, cui putat hoc vacare *Quint.* l. ix. c. 4. ad finem.

(*l*) Illa quidem maximi laboris, ne laborata videantur.—Diſſimulatio Curæ præcipua, ut numeri ſponte fluxiſſe, non arceſſiti et coacti eſſe videantur. *Ibid.*

Theſe are ſome of the principal Rules which regard a numerous Compoſition: To which it may not be amiſs briefly to adjoin a few others of a more general Nature; which though they do not immediately relate to Numbers, and perhaps may appear too minute to ſome, yet I am perſwaded will be of Service (eſpecially to young Students) in the Art of Compoſing, ſo far as it regards the Language.

(1.) Two long Sentences ſhould not ſtand together, though many ſhort ones may.

The Reaſon of this is plain. Becauſe the former require too great Expenſe of Breath to pronounce them, and too much Intenſeneſs of Thought to comprehend the full Senſe of them; which the latter doe not. And a Writer ſhould always have a Regard to the Eaſe of his Readers (*m*). It is a vile Affectation in an Author, leſt he ſhould not appear learned, to be afraid of making Things too plain. A long Period therefore is better divided into two ſhort ones, containing juſt the ſame Senſe, if it conveniently may.

(2.) Words

(*m*) "When the Reader is greatly perplexed and at a Loſs for the "Meaning, though the Diction be ever ſo elegant, the Charm va-"niſhes. The Muſick is drowned amidſt the Hurry and Confuſion of "Sentiments. It ſeems a juſt Rule in Polite Writing, though not "always obſerved by the Moderns, that two long Sentences ought never "ſucceſſively to follow one another. Seldom, if ever, will you find "either in *Demoſthenes* or *Plato*, any remarkable Deviation from this "Rule. They were too good Judges in Compoſition, not to know "that a Repetition of the ſame Length of Period becomes flat and "inſipid. The dwelling too long on one Note is offenſive to the "Ear. Whereas if you intermingle a *laconic* Conciſeneſs, and frequent-"ly introduce ſhort, nervous, clear, expreſſive Sentences, after one "greatly prolonged, the Effect ſuch a Method has on the Mind is "wonderful, the Variety extreamly entertaining." *Geddes* on Compoſition, p. 6.

(2.) Words of ſimilar Sound or Terminations ſhould be avoided, or at leaſt be kept at a good Diſtance the one from the other. For if they are ſo near together as to jingle in the Ear, they will certainly offend it.

(3.) The Concurrence of many *Genitives* with their Sign *of* prefixed, ſhould be avoided as an inelegance. Two may ſometimes be admitted, but three never. *e. g. I have thrown off moſt of my Suſpicions of the Sincerity of your Intentions.*

(4.) That which ſome call *Alliteration*, *i. e.* beginning ſeveral Words with the ſame Letter, if it be natural, is a real Beauty, and not to be deſpiſed; and accordingly we find it practiſed by ſome of the beſt Authors; particularly Mr. *Pope.*

But here we muſt except againſt two Letters, *viz.* (*w*) and (*ſ*). The firſt becauſe there is ſome difficulty in the Formation of its Sound; and therefore when two Words meet which begin with it, they had better be ſeparated by ſome expletive Particle, to which a good Ear will readily direct. —— The ſame may be ſaid of (*th*).

And the frequent Concurrence of the (*ſ*) muſt be avoided, becauſe it creates a diſagreeable Hiſſing in the Voice; a Fault which Foreigners univerſally find in our Language: and is occaſioned by three Letters in the Engliſh Alphabet which convey that Sound, *viz.* (*ſ*), (*z*) and ſoft (*c*): And we ſtill increaſe it by an Affectation of changing the Termination *eth* into *es*, e. g. *bears*, *loves*, *does*, for *beareth*, *loveth*, *doeth.*

(5.) Do

(5.) Do not often conclude a Sentence with the Sign of the *Genetive* or *Ablative* Caſe; becauſe that precludes an Elegance you ſhould always aim at, *viz.* cloſing with an emphatical Word. e. g. *Perfect Vertue is the higheſt Happineſs Mankind are capable of, and Reaſon the Rule they are to walk by.* Better thus, *Perfect Vertue is the higheſt Happineſs of which Mankind are capable, and Reaſon the Rule by which they are to walk.*——But the other Cloſe is not to be univerſally rejected, and a good Rhythm will determine which of them we ought to chuſe.

(6.) When a Word ends with a Vowel diſtinctly heard, the following Word ſhould not begin with the ſame if it may conveniently be avoided; much leſs with a Syllable of the like Sound. *e. g.* "Ano*ther* "*there*fore *may make* a *due Uſe* of the Command-"*ment men*tioned in ev*ery re*gard." What Ear can bear to be thus grated!

CHAP. X.

The Advantage of a numerous Compoſition.

THE firſt Queſtion a wiſe Man will put to himſelf in any conſiderable Affair or Buſineſs he undertakes, is, *cui Bono?* What good End will it anſwer? And is the Benefit expected from it equal to the Pains it requires? If not, it will be in Part *Labour in vain*; a ſerious Trifling; and ſpending Time *laborioſe nihil agendo.* An Imputation, of which *perhaps* ſome may ſuppoſe the Writer of theſe Eſſays does

does not ſtand altogether clear, and from which he is very deſirous, if poſſible, to be abſolved.

I have, it is true, been leading the Reader in a Path which of late hath been little frequented; and having conducted him through it, I am now to inform him for what Reaſon I have brought him hither. For it may juſtly be aſked, If it be a Way worth purſuing, why has it lain ſo long neglected? If not, what need of all this Pains to clear it?—To which the Anſwer is ready. It is a Way worth purſuing; and the Reaſon why this Science (to diſmiſs the Metaphor) hath been ſo long neglected, is owing in Part to the Difficulty of reducing it to any certain juſt Rules and Principles which may diſcover the Foundation of it, and give the Mind a right Direction in it; and in Part to an Ignorance of the great Advantage which flows from a good Acquaintance with it. The former I have endeavoured to inveſtigate and explain in the preceeding Chapters, and the latter I am briefly to ſpecify in this, that the Reader may not look upon all his Labour as loſt.

And in the firſt Place, a familiar Acquaintance with the Rules and Principles of Proſaic Numbers will contribute a good deal to the Facility of Compoſition. When a Perſon by a little Care and Practice is once Maſter of a neat and numerous Stile, he will find it no longer difficult to expreſs his beſt Sentiments in a lively Manner; if his Conceptions be clear, his Stile will be ſo too; and will diſcover the Spirit of true Oratory without the Pomp of it.

And in reviſing his Compoſures he will be able to correct them with more Judgment; and when he diſcerns a Roughneſs or Lameneſs in his Stile, which his Ear may diſcover, he will immediately perceive

the beſt Way to correct and ſmooth it; wherein he will find but little Aſſiſtance from the Ear alone, which in this Caſe is a better Judge than Guide.

Beſides, a good Skill in the Principles of numerical Structure opens to us one chief Source of that Pleaſure which in the Stile of a well-compoſed Piece, we have often taſted, but never knew before from whence it ſprung; which cannot fail to give an agreeable Entertainment to a curious and inquiſitive Mind, which not content with a Set of formal Notions, wants to ſurvey their Foundation and trace them up to their firſt Principles. And will teach us to judge better not only of our own Compoſitions but thoſe of other Men; and will at once enlarge our View and improve our Taſte of Books and Language.

When we are once well verſed in this Science, it will be no ſmall Help to our Expreſſion, even on common Occaſions, and give a graceful Turn to our Language in ordinary Diſcourſe. It's a pleaſing Amuſement, in which I have often indulged myſelf, to obſerve how naturally Men run into thoſe Numbers in vulgar Stile, which are beſt adapted to the Spirit of the Subject they talk of, or the Paſſions which animate the Perſon that ſpeaks; and which to a curious Obſerver are diſtinguiſhable no leſs by the Numbers of his Stile than the Tone of his Voice. Thus, Reſentment and Wrath are expreſſed not only with a loud and boiſterous Tone, but in bold and daring Numbers; whereas in Sorrow, Complaint and Pity, the Numbers, like the Voice, are low, feeble, flexible and faultering. And almoſt all the foregoing Rules you may obſerve, with a little Attention, to be clearly exemplify'd in the Dialect of the moſt illiterate Perſons. For however defective they be in a Propriety

of

of Expreſſion, they are generally very happy in their Rhythmus; to which they are directed by the Ear, or the natural Harmony of Sounds. In a particular Manner you may obſerve the Beauty of their Cloſes; for they commonly finiſh their Periods with Anapæſtics or Iambics (*Ariſtotle* ſaith (*n*), chiefly with Iambics) and very frequently with an emphatical Word; that is, emphatical either in its Sound or Senſe.

By this Art many a Writer conciliates to himſelf more Applauſe than he deſerves. And it's wonderful to think how ſtrong a Prepoſſeſſion, a neat and numrous Diction gives you in Favour of your Author. It often compenſates a Defect of Thought; and, like a muſical Interlude between the Acts, keeps you in good Humour till you meet with better Entertainment. At leaſt, it poliſhes and adorns a low Thought (as fine Clothes do an ordinary Perſon) in ſuch a Manner as to give you a better Opinion of it than is due to its intrinſick Worth. Hence ſome Writers have ſerved themſelves of this Art ſo far as to turn it into mere Artifice; and by Means of a ſweet and flowing Stile, adorned with here and there a vivid Phraſe and brilliant Expreſſion, have wrote themſelves into Fame without Thought; (for as one obſerves (*o*) *it's a much eaſier Matter to Write than to think*) whilſt the injudicious Reader takes all the Tinſel for true Sterling.

However if this Science be Subject to Abuſe (and what is not?) does it therefore deſerve Contempt? If Fools and Fops appear in rich and gay Attire, that is no Reaſon ſure that a Man of Senſe ſhould be a Sloven.

In

(*n*) Ex omnibus Metris Sermoni quotidiano accommodatum maximè eſt *Iambicum*. Cui rei id Signo eſt quod plurima nos Iambica proferamus imprudentes in Collocutione mutua. *Poetic.* c. 2.

(*o*) *Fitzoſborn.* Let. lvii.

In a Word, it's ſufficient Recommendation of this Subject, that *Longinus* himſelf makes it a Branch of the true Sublime; by Vertue of which many of the Antients acquired the Reputation of fine Writers, who had little elſe to entitle them to that Character. For ſais he—" Several Poets and other Writers poſſeſſed of " no natural Sublimity; or rather entire Strangers to " it, have very frequently made Uſe of common and " vulgar Terms, that have not the leaſt Air of E- " legance to recommend them, yet by muſically " diſpoſing and artfully connecting ſuch Terms, they " clothe their Periods in a Kind of Pomp, and dex- " trouſly conceal their intrinſick Lowneſs (*p*)." And this was what gave *Euripides* all his Fame; who, in the Judgment of that diſcerning Critic, *excelled rather in fine Compoſition than in fine Sentiments* (*q*).

And that which was in ſo high Eſteem among the Antients, I cannot but think, for the Reaſons before mentioned, deſerves a more particular Regard than it hath yet met with from the Moderns.

(*p*) *Longin.* de Sublim, Sect. xxxiv.
(*q*) Τῆς συνθέσεως ποιητὴς ὁ Ἐυριπίδης μᾶλλόν ἐστιν, ἢ τῶν νῶν. *Ibid.*

F I N I S.